

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

**December 02, 2021
2:30 PM**

Technical Advisory Committee Members Present:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Brad Coy	MOA/Traffic Engineering Department
Brian Lindamood	Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC)
Todd Vanhove	Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF), Central Region Planning
Luke Bowland	DOT&PF
Adeyemi Alimi	Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation (ADEC)
Matt Stichick	MOA/Anchorage Health Department (AHD)
Kristine Bunnell	MOA/Planning Department
Bart Rudolph	MOA/Public Transportation Department (PTD)
Steve Ribuffo	MOA/Port of Alaska
Shaina Kilcoyne	MOA/Energy and Sustainability
Kent Kohlase	MOA/Project Management & Engineering (PM&E)

Also in attendance:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Craig Lyon	MOA/Planning
Christine Schuette	MOA/Planning
Jon Cecil	MOA/Planning
Jim Amundsen	DOT&PF
John Linnell	DOT&PF
Lindsey Hajduk	
Adam Moser	DOT&PF
Robert Bravo	
James Starzec	DOT&PF

**Policy Committee Member*

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

CHAIR COY called the meeting to order at 2:32 p.m. Mr. Alimi represented ADEC on behalf of Cindy Heil. Mr. Rudolph represented PTD on behalf of Jamie Acton. Kristine Bunnell represented the Planning Department on behalf of Michelle McNulty. 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

MR. RUDOLPH moved to approve the agenda. MR. STICHICK seconded.

Hearing no objections, the agenda was approved.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – November 4, 2021

MS. BUNNELL moved to approve the minutes. MR VANHOVE seconded.

Hearing no objections, the minutes were approved.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. 2022-23 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

BACKGROUND:

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is required by federal law under Title 23, amended 23 USC 134 as interpreted by FHWA in 23 CFR 450.308, when federal funds are used for transportation planning. The Draft 2022-23 UPWP defines the transportation planning activities and products to be developed by AMATS and other transportation planning agencies during the fiscal year (January 1 – December 31). It is the basis for allocating federal, state, and local funds for short- and long-range transportation planning activities within the AMATS area. The 2022 UPWP budget outlines staff time that will be spent on the tasks identified in the UPWP narrative. The narrative is updated on a 2-year cycle and the budget is updated annually.

UPWP tasks are grouped into ‘Work Elements’ in the following categories:

- 100 Element: Plans and Programs*
- 200 Element: Subarea and Special Studies*
- 300 Element: Air Quality*
- 400 Element: Data and Modeling*
- 500 Element: Program Administration and Public Involvement*
- 600 Element: Public Transportation*

MR. LYON briefed the Committee on the above-noted UPWP explaining that the narrative covers two years and with AMATS receiving a single-year allocation through the State, we are able to update the budget annually. The narrative was released for public comment, but the budget is not required to be released for public comment.

In response to Ms. Kilcoyne's question if there were any major changes from the 2021 budget, MR. LYON noted that the main changes made were that we finished the Non-motorized Plan and Spenard Road, so they are not included in this, but we did add the Safety Plan, the TDM (Transportation Demand Management) Study, and the TSMO (Transportation System Management & Operation) Plan.

CHAIR COY asked for clarification that the Street Typology is ready to be hired out to a consultant, but the budget does not show any funds for this.

MR. LYON noted that the CRRSAA funds (Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act) are 100 percent federal share, meaning no match is required. One of the biggest challenges we have with federal funds when it comes to planning projects is that we cannot bond for it. The bond council will not allow us to use those funds just for planning projects but will only allow the use of bond funds for a project if you are going to build something or to cover a local match. If your plan is to build something as part of the funding, then bond funds can be used. Since it is difficult for the Planning Department to come up with the money, we are doing an in-kind match. Our suggestion is to put the Street Typology project into the next TIP and use the CRRSAA funds., so we will not have to worry about the match. You will also see the Safety Plan has a small amount of funds for staff time and we are, hopefully, going to also fund that with CRRSAA. We have gotten better at finding in-kind matches, but after realizing we could not come up with them, we had projects languishing for months and months while searching what departments, such as Transit, Traffic, or PM&E, could possibly cover a little bit of the match making it extremely challenging. In short, the reason for not seeing the funds included is that we are going to add them later, which will require an amendment. The Policy Committee is still required to approve the dollar figure.

There were no public comments.

MS. BUNNELL moved to recommend adoption of the 2022-2023 UPWP to the Policy Committee with the narrative, as written, with the proposed annual element budget allocation presented by staff. MR. VANHOVE seconded.

Hearing no objections, this motion passed.

**b. 2023-2026 Proposed TIP (Transportation Improvement Program) Criteria
2023-2026 TIP Criteria Public Comments
2023-2026 TIP Comment/Response Summary**

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, the AMATS Complete Streets Policy, and the Anchorage Climate Action Plan. AMATS staff would like to request approval

to proceed with incorporating the public comments for the proposed 2023-2026 TIP Criteria. The criteria were released for a 60-day public review and comment period from July 23 through September 20, 2021. Comments were categorized by criteria type consisting of the following:

Category	Comment Type	# Received
1	Safety	21
2	Mobility	29
3	Economic	26
4	Environment	28
5	Preservation	11
	General Comments	24
Total Comments Received		139

MR. LYON noted that a much more in-depth review of these criteria was done to include changes submitted by the Policy Committee very late in the process during the last update but had agreed to allow the changes be included in this update. The criteria were released for a 60-day public review comment period (double the normal comment period) and 139 comments were received, which is the most ever received for TIP criteria. He pointed out that the pages had not been numbered and suggested to address any changes page-by-page and then move to recommend approval noting any changes made in detail.

Category 1 – Safety

PAGE 1

Comment #14 – Safe Routes to School:

MR. STICHICK asked if giving “Safe Routes to Schools” credit in projects would potentially qualify for the two bonus points under “Pedestrian Safety for HSIP or VisionZero high injury sites.

MR. LYON explained that the only schools that do not have designated school zones with “Safe Routes to Schools” are magnet or charter schools. A neighborhood school has “Safe Routes to Schools” with a designated walking route. Charter schools do not have walking routes because students come from all over the city. We believe the pedestrian safety points included in this should take care of the issue.

CHAIR COY mentioned that the criteria improving pedestrian safety has bonus points and reads, “Improves pedestrian safety at an HSIP and/or VisionZero high injury network location.” We could add language to read, “HSIP and VisionZero high injury network location and/or a Safe Routes to School route.”

MR. LYON asked for clarification that the intent is to give it points if it is included on a Safe Walking Route to School?

MR. STICHICK believed the comment was for many of their facilities that do not have a designated safe route, so having that comment does not solve that particular concern. He asked how many serious injuries constitutes an HSIP or Vision Zero High Injury Network location.

MR. LYON did not have the exact answer, but the VisionZero plan includes listings of the high injury locations and HSIP identifies those locations.

CHAIR COY added that the Safe Routes to School walking map is updated annually by the Traffic Engineering Department and identified walking routes are available to the public for any school in the Anchorage area (not sure about Charter schools).

MR. LYON noted that the idea for this category is to give points to projects in locations that already have some sort of issue. It does not make sense to give points to a project that is in a designated walking zone to a school. We should be putting points into the locations that have known injury/safety issues and put forth our money to help deal with that issue, which is why staff recommended no change.

Category 2 - Mobility

PAGE 2

Comment #23 – Single-occupancy Vehicle Travel:

MS. KILCOYNE referred to staff's comment that reads, "Shifting away from single-occupancy vehicles is a broad goal and the criteria needs to be more specific and measurable", and she asked if it made sense to figure out what could be more specific and measurable, or was it too late? She also asked if anyone else was measuring it.

MR. LYON noted that it would be challenging to measure. This project will shift more people away from single-occupancy vehicles. It is a good goal but making it to the point where it could be measured is the challenge because we are always being asked by the federal government to show how we are scoring the criteria. There might be some other entities doing that, but it would consist of those that have adequate staff, such as Boston, Chicago, or Houston.

MR. RUDOLPH added that the outcome is reducing single-occupancy vehicle travel, but you do that by making the pedestrian network better with the transit network. That is how it is scored in TIP criteria, so it is covered. He recommended replacing it with the language shown in Comment #25 "to reduce dependence on vehicle travel".

MR. LYON clarified that this is just replacing the language and would be a recommended change, and not something we would have to attempt to measure.

CHAIR COY mentioned that, currently, two changes have been identified with "Reducing Dependence on Vehicle Travel" and the "Safe Routes to School" language in the handbook.

PAGE 3**Comments #49 and #50 – Reduces Transit Vehicle Delay:**

MR. RUDOLPH noted that this is another instance of saying the same thing but using different words. Reducing transit delay is a technical term used in our industry a lot and is definable, but this is more of a negative statement. He clarified that we are accomplishing the same thing because transit delay is reducing congestion and this talks about transit re-entry on roads from pullouts, passenger boardings, roadway facilities, and intersection approaches. The best way this city can help make transit competitive is by preemptive transit signal prioritization. He thinks this is really what we are getting at, but we are not to the point of having transit only lanes in this town right now. We are still accomplishing the goals that these two comments are addressing and no changes to staff's responses are needed.

CHAIR COY mentioned that some of the things being asked for beyond our ability right now are tools to accomplish. He wondered if it would be a valuable exercise to go through and list some of the things that are aspirational tools that would help us think of ways we could develop through future projects, such as the MTP.

MR. LYON replied, yes, that is a good idea. The normal course of business is that we get these criteria and get the nomination forms out. We have put out the Call for Nominations and started ranking and scoring projects, then began to realize that it was not working quite like we wanted it to, so we had to place notes at the bottom reminding us that it had to be changed the next time not necessarily knowing how we would measure a certain transit delay, or when that is going to come about, or are we going to have the correct data. Knowing it is aspirational, so we can do that. It would not be out of the realm of possibility adding something in the back of that handbook about having some aspirational goal for the future, and having it catalogued.

CHAIR COY clarified that we are not recommending all these be done but are just identifying them as potential options.

MR. LYON added that if the Committee became aware of any additional recommendations, to inform staff and they could be included one or two months from now.

PAGE 4**Comment #71 – Special Land Use Features of the 2040 Land Use Plan:**

MR. STICHICK asked how the Special Land Use offset for Eagle River would function.

MR. LYON pointed out that there is language in the 2040 Land Use Plan that addresses Special Land Use features and the points given if it is in the offset for Eagle River. He believed the intention is to add some points to capture the fact that it is in the Land Use Plan Map.

Comment #69 – Points for projects in a specific neighborhood plan or any adopted plan:

MR. RUDOLPH noted that this comment is also found on several others and requested clarification as to what it means.

MR. LYON noted that the public comment reads, “Add points for projects in a specific neighborhood plan or any adopted plan.” Staff was not sure if they were asking if they could get extra points for a plan from 1982 that mentioned a certain road project, so we are suggesting adding a time limit for adopted plans of 5 to 10 years old.

CHAIR COY indicated that a desire had been expressed, from those in attendance at some of the discussions he was involved in, that when a neighborhood plan identifies how they want the neighborhood to look, that projects not come in and do something different, but rather acknowledge and try to help accomplish what those visions are. Is there a good way to accomplish that or would it already be getting accomplished with this?

MR. LYON noted that the criteria, in years past, would get two, three, or however many points if it is an adopted plan. That is why we are trying to tighten this up by setting a timeline of, maybe, 5 to 10 years. He added that a project may have been in the plan for 15 to 20 years and has never gone anywhere, and might have a reason for not going anywhere, but it is still getting points. Should it still be getting points even though it is an ancient project?

CHAIR COY asked if there are other projects that rise to the top?

MR. LYON explained that one of the things he continues to try and reinforce about the criteria to keep in mind is to not get tunnel vision and just focus on what it is we are looking at. It could be a truck related safety issue and we are focusing on if this is the right amount of points because there is a significant amount of criteria that a project could get points for, even though it did not score well here, but possibly still rise to the top.

MR. BOWLAND suggested, instead of having a time range, having adopted plans with a relevant or justified need.

MR. LYON wondered who would be responsible for defining the justified need?

MR. RUDOLPH expressed that his only issue with the 5- to 10-year timeframe is that a lot of plans need to be updated but are not updated because of the lack of staff time and funding, but the needs are probably still there. As a Planner, you spend so much time and money developing these plans and there are millions and millions of dollars in the project, and you are never going to get to them in five years, but there are still needs. He did not want to discount that just because we have not had the time or money to go back and update that neighborhood plan.

CHAIR COY likes the idea of encouraging consistency with the planning.

MR. LYON noted that we have such a robust effort that goes into creating an MTP and adopted every four years, and, theoretically, these are the group of projects we really want. If it is a project that the community really wants and is inside that MTP, you are going to get points for it being in there. Most of the non-motorized projects are in the current Non-motorized Plan and there may be some that are in the Areawide Trails Plan from the 1990s that are not in there, but those projects are usually a little cut-through between two houses that we really want to make sure nothing is placed across there when the subdivision is developed. For the most part, the well-known major non-motorized facilities are in the recently adopted Non-motorized Plan, so you will get points.

MR. VANHOVE thinks there needs to be sideboards put onto these because, typically, the older plans do not have any fiscal constraint, meaning there are billions of dollars in these plans that you are never going to get to. Moving forward, part of the planning recommendations are that all plans should have some type of fiscal constraint maybe preventing some of these from getting super stale because they have been in the same plan for 20 to 30 years and you are still working on the same plan. If you are developing plans without fiscal constraint, you will eventually run out of time to get one, which will force you to renew the plan.

Category 4 – Environment

PAGE 5:

MS. KILCOYNE asked for clarification on what would be a Greenhouse Gas Emission reduction. She liked staff's comment about adding an example of projects that can reduce greenhouse gases. But without knowing what that example is, there is another comment about expanding the road capacity that will likely lead to emissions increases, so maybe the example could be something along those lines. She agreed that expanding roads does lead to more traffic in the future.

MR. VANHOVE pointed out that it could also decrease. If there is congestion, then traffic would be sitting there idling, but if you were to expand it and traffic is now moving at 35 or 40 miles per hour, then you would have less emissions.

MS. KILCOYNE agreed that would happen if it were in large intersections, but we are in a city. She did not have a specific recommendation and will see what staff recommends as an example, but it did feel a little arbitrary. An example could include traffic symbols and that would also help in reducing severe injuries.

PAGE 6

Comment #104 – Environmental Impacts:

MS. KILCOYNE asked if all those proposals are too prescriptive.

MR. LYON replied that this is talking about environmental impacts and is getting considerably prescriptive. If we were to capture everything, it would be a long criterion.

MR. STICHICK asked if this comment would provide an opportunity to maybe flush out of our handbook the information on applying these criteria because some good points were made in the comment.

MR. LYON explained that the thought from staff was that you can get very prescriptive with this. The criteria talk about having an impact on right-of-way, wetlands properties, or environmentally sensitive areas. All of this is covered under there, but we do not usually get that prescriptive in the criteria itself. We could add a longer list for these different criteria in the handbook, but all these listed apply to someone that is designing, permitting, etc., that they are required to look at, meaning these are already going to be looked at when an AMATS funded project goes through the system because the federally funded projects are required to follow NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act).

MR. VANHOVE agreed with Mr. Lyon that these will be looked at during the project development process if you want to eliminate a project before it gets to project development just because you have already started the development and scoring process.

CHAIR COY commented that having just a little bit of a summary is not as thorough an assessment but more of a judgement call.

MR. LYON suggested to keep in mind that we are a planning entity and are doing generalized planning. We are looking to get new projects to put into our funding stream and using criteria to separate those we finish and get the top-rated projects plugged in if we have the funding. Then the process can start, and engineers, designers, and DOT&PF can review them. If they get to a project and realize there are so many environmental issues in a wetlands area, etc. that it just does not make sense to go forward, that is when this is supposed to happen, as opposed to presupposing it while doing the criteria. He is not a wetlands expert or an expert in any of those areas to be able to determine that.

MR. VANHOVE stated that not having the knowledge or expertise is exactly the point. Unless you are an environmental expert and can determine if these impacts being considered are going to be enough to stop this project or not, it should be evaluated during the environmental process, not during the pre-planning process.

PAGE 7

Comment #129 – General Comments:

CHAIR COY noted that this comment is about testing scoring criteria on multiple projects. He believed this was something the Committee had asked about as well.

MR. LYON replied, yes, he and Mr. Jongenelen did that early on with the criteria ranking three road projects and two non-motorized using both the old and new criteria, and they settled out about the same. He thought the new criteria reflected a lot of the projects we wanted to do, even if the projects came out in a similar location.

CHAIR COY expressed that it is a little bit harder to tell with only a few examples, but it does make sense that they were similar.

Ms. Kilcoy left the meeting at 3:39 p.m.

PAGE 8

Comment #132 – General Comments:

CHAIR COY noted that this comment is about Chugiak-Eagle River being left out of contention in the TIP, but, instead, funds were being weighted towards Anchorage.

MR. LYON explained that, over the last 18 years and the different times that he has done the exercise to look at the percentage of funding that has gone to Chugiak-Eagle River matching up with the actual population of those areas, the percentage of funding was always higher than the population. That is just one measure, but Chugiak-Eagle River certainly have received a decent amount of funds over the years. As staff, we look at recommending projects that can be delivered and do not have areas that we know have giant wetland issues or other issues. We try to balance these out fairly allowing everyone the opportunity to receive some of the dollars. It is a common complaint, but we always try to make sure everyone is getting something based on the need.

Comment #136 – General Comments:

CHAIR COY noted that this comment mentioned the lack of any explanatory introduction. He asked if the public did not have the TIP Handbook, or might have overlooked it?

MR. LYON stated that it was posted along with the criteria at the same time. It is possible they did not see it or did not know what it was. We have not done this before, so maybe they were not used to seeing that as an option, but the information was posted.

There were no public comments.

CHAIR COY clarified that the changes are as follows:

1. Safe Routes to School discussion and making sure the Handbook addresses it.
2. Making sure the Handbook also includes a list of ideas and potential aspirations.
3. The change to Comment #23 regarding the broad goal language used in Comment #25.
4. Revising the response in Comment #104.

MR. RUDOLPH moved to forward a recommendation to the Policy Committee the 2023-2026 TIP Criteria with the four changes just mentioned. MR. VANHOVE seconded.

Hearing no objections, this motion passed.

MR. LYON suggested that if the Committee should find any additional comments needing to be addressed to please let staff know. Staff can then forward the comments to the Policy Committee.

6. PROJECT AND PLAN UPDATES

MS. SCHUETTE informed the Committee that the MTP 2050 Goals and Objectives 30-day public review was released yesterday and can be found on AMATS' website and the MTP specific website, which is now accessible.

7. GENERAL INFORMATION - None

8. COMMITTEE COMMENTS

MR. LYON announced that this is his last TAC meeting as AMATS Coordinator. He has accepted the position as Planning Director. Mr. Jongenelen will be acting as Coordinator until that position is filled.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

10. ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no objections, the meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.