

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

**November 3, 2022  
2:30 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:

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Name	Representing
Brad Coy (Chair)	MOA/Traffic Engineering Department
Brian Lindamood	Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC)
Craig Lyon	MOA/Planning Department
Sean Baski	Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF), Central Region Planning
Luke Bowland	DOT&PF
Jamie Acton	MOA/Public Transportation Department (PTD)
Adeyemi Alimi	Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation (ADEC)
Kent Kohlhas	MOA/Project Management & Engineering (PM&E)

Also in attendance:

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Name	Representing
Aaron Jongenelen	MOA/Planning
Christine Schuette	MOA/Planning
Joni Wilm	MOA/Planning
Jon Cecil	MOA/Planning
Chelsea Ward-Waller	MOA/Planning
Diana Evans	
Steve Horn	
Kevin Jackson	DOT&PF
Wolfgang Junge*	DOT&PF
Jeff Frkonja	RSG
Emily Weiser	Bike Anchorage
Van Le	R&M Consultants
Bart Rudolph	MOA/PTD
James Starzec	DOT&PF
Nancy Pease	
Reid Haefer	RSG
Joann Mitchell	Kinney Engineering
Michael Rehberg	
Gabrielle Freeman	RSG
Cheryl Richardson	
Christina Huber	DOT&PF
Ben Coleman	R&M Consultants

Helen Oppenheimer	Federal Highways Administration (FHWA)
Rachel Steer	DOWL
Jeanne Bowie	Kinney Engineering
Evan Anderson	
Randy Brown	MOA/PTD
Sean Holland	DOWL

*\*Policy Committee Member*

## **1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

CHAIR COY called the meeting to order at 2:32 p.m. Sean Baski represented the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities on behalf of Todd Vanhove. Steve Ribuffo was excused. Matt Stichick was absent. 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**

MR. JONGENELEN informed the Committee that Item 6.a. AMATS Model Information would not be available until the December meeting.

CHAIR COY noted that there were no additional changes or objections to the agenda and determined the agenda as approved.

## **4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – October 13, 2022**

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

*Hearing no objections, the minutes were approved.*

## **5. BUSINESS ITEMS**

### **a. 92nd Avenue Undercrossing Update and Action**

CHRISTINA HUBER with DOT&PF provided a PowerPoint presentation.

The Committee discussed roundabouts, public involvement, the MOA Planning & Zoning Commission's role in the Context Sensitive Solutions process, total project cost, and what

information the Policy Committee had requested of TAC to provide. They also discussed connectivity and traffic studies.

CHAIR COY opened the floor to public comments.

NANCY PEASE noted the following:

1. The plans provided by DOT&PF were not practical and do not fit the sites well.
2. No reason to put a new southbound onramp all the way through the roundabout.
3. Efficiency of the feasibility report.
4. DOT&PF east/west average daily traffic figures show declining daily on Dimond since 2014.
5. Concerns regarding parking demand and Greenhouse Gas Emissions.
6. 92nd Avenue Transit Corridor.
7. Evaluation of land uses.
8. Pedestrian safety.
9. Traffic analysis.

WOLFGANG JUNGE with DOT&PF addressed the following:

1. With over 300 projects in development at any one time, he doesn't get buried in the details, but what he does worry a lot about is the process. When we talk about the feasibility aspect of making changes like this (Ms. Huber spoke best to this), the ability to go back and force in a predetermined outcome, such as a non-motorized-only outcome, is not part of the process that we adhere to, which is NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act). NEPA develops the purpose, need, and the range of alternatives.
2. The most we could do would be able to go back and hit the reset button completely and redo everything and see what that outcome looks like. It may very well be that it is non-motorized only. Ms. Pease had spoken to some of the changes in the east/west traffic volumes, but he did not see anything substantive that would change the outcome and be a reasonable expectation.
3. Think back to the Martin Luther King Drive Extension and Piper connection where the basic foundational assumption of that project changed. When we started the project, we started accepting and expending federal funds, and then we shut it down as a No Build alternative. If you remember, we had to send a letter to the Federal Highways Administration explaining why we were stopping the project and rendering under a No Build alternative in order to allow the Federal Highway Administration to participate in those costs.
4. This is on a much bigger scale for us to rewind and restart everything and be able to explain to our federal funding partners why we are doing this. We would need to be able to make that argument to them about what has fundamentally changed causing us to go back and restart the entire project over again. Concerning to him is just the eligibility part. Is there really a basis for going back and doing this that has changed? It is difficult for him to see that.

MR. LYON noted that, other than asking for this presentation to go before the Policy Committee, he thinks that is the extent this Committee had been asked to do. We have heard the discussion and the direction, so we just need to make a motion.

CHAIR COY thought the PC was asking for our perspective and was concerned that the PC would send it back to us asking for our review and thoughts.

MR. LYON further noted that we can only go in the direction given and this is not AMATS' allocation. We do not get to decide other than to vote to remove all funding, but that is it. His understanding is that the PC asked this Committee to take a second look that there might be a possibility of it being non-motorized only. He did not feel comfortable directing the PC.

MR. JONGENELEN mentioned that Mr. Junge is the Policy Committee's Chairperson but Mr. Vanhove had attended that meeting in his absence and is not present at this meeting.

CHAIR COY asked if it made sense to forward a statement that could read, "It is our understanding that it would require a restart with no guarantee there would be an undercrossing as the third alternative, as requested. The TAC has concerns."

MR. LYON thought that having this Committee draft a resolution during the meeting would require at least 45 minutes. It would be much easier to come back next month with a draft resolution for discussion.

In response to Chair Coy's request for clarification that the PC only asked for an update, MR. JONGENELEN noted, yes, he will be providing the PC an update of what was discussed here.

CHAIR COY also asked if it would be okay to ask the PC if they want something specific on this and, if they do, then maybe we could come to an agreement and draft a resolution. If they are not asking for something specific, then this is good to just be forwarded to them?

MR. JONGENELEN noted that he could, as part of his update, inform the PC that there was discussion back and forth about what exactly was being asked of the TAC as to whether the PC wanted feedback about the TAC's thoughts on this, or just wanted this information provided.

MR. KOHLHASE agreed with Mr. Lyon. The PC is made up of experienced people who presumably knew what they were asking us to do, which was to evaluate the feasibility and the impacts, and we have asked the project team to do that. His thinking is that we forward that evaluation to the PC with a recommendation that the project team can come in and provide the same presentation given to the TAC. That is what the PC asked us to do. He would like to think that if the PC wanted us to make a technical recommendation as to whether the project should proceed or be halted, or that we make a motion recommending the scope be changed, then they would have asked us for that. They did not.

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MR. LYON moved to ask DOT&PF to present this topic to the Policy Committee and request clarification from the Policy Committee of what actions they would like the TAC to take. MS. ACTON seconded.

MR. JUNGE commented that from a policy perspective, what is really at the center of the issue is the feasibility of these alternative outcomes to the project. Is it feasible that something other than what is currently in the design be implemented into this? From a technical perspective, if the question is what is the feasibility of altering the current design to include only a non-motorized outcome. If that is the question being asked, then from a technical perspective understanding the process we go through using federal funds with traffic modeling, purpose and need, and alternatives and preferred alternatives in that development. Can we feasibly go in and take any one of these particular non-motorized outcomes and alter the design as shown today? That might be one way of looking at it because if it is not feasible to propose an outcome that was different and a recommended or preferred alternative, then the only real feasible alternative is to go back and start over. We will not risk having predetermined outcomes, which is a violation of NEPA. That is what, from a technical perspective, we are looking for input from the TAC about the feasibility of that action or alternatives that would render that.

CHAIR COY clarified that he thinks the perspective we are sharing from this motion is what the DOT&PF presentation would provide to the PC. The question is if it is coming from DOT&PF versus us as a committee having a statement on that. It sounds like that because Mr. Kohlhasse had said the PC would be able to get out of the presentation.

MR. KOHLHASE clarified that he had taken information from a verbatim statement, but after listening to Mr. Junge, he understood that no matter what was said, the PC is perhaps looking for not only the TAC to forward with the presentation, but to provide a recommendation.

MR. LYON believed that the PC may have wanted what was just discussed, but that was not the direction they gave. TAC member Todd Vanhove chaired the PC meeting in Mr. Junge's absence and is not present at this meeting to speak to it.

MR. JONGENELEN was in attendance at the PC meeting and somewhat agreed with Mr. Junge because what the PC is really looking for is this Committee's technical expertise on should this project be changed or not. If you just forward them the presentation, The PC will want to know what the TAC had to say. If we want to save a little time, he recommended forwarding the presentation along with a simple statement that says, "Based on our discussion..."

CHAIR COY appreciated the clarification speaking to the feasibility as that makes the perspective easier to provide a statement that is simple, concise, and gets to the heart of what is being asked and can be technical.

MR. BASKI pointed out that there are a couple of things before us. The feasibility, the question for the project about what it looks like, timelines, and the potential outcome. Ms. Pease had shared concerns about this not being what they envisioned with the roundabout

alternative. If we move forward to the next alternative where we have the undercrossing that is nearly 400 feet long, we will be asking ourselves about the usefulness and usability by anyone after we build this facility for \$30 million and if it is actually going to get used? Are people going to feel safe? He would not send his 14-year-old daughter through a grade separation off to the side where there is no one that can view it. This is not a viable alternative that actually results in people using this and is a tremendous amount of money for something that is not going to be used. Then you start looking at other concepts. What about an overcrossing? With an overcrossing you are nearly three stories in the air and potentially adding stairways and other things to cut down on some of their circuitous routes out of direct path considerations. He did not know that this actually gets used. Then there is the roundabout alternative and what it provides. We can start mixing and matching but comments can be made about the safety concerns associated with an “at grade that blocks crossings” and putting in an undercrossing just underneath the highway without any traffic calming features. If you just have a straight stretch of a frontage road through there, there is no traffic calming other than potentially adding the bike lane and pedestrian facilities, but people are still driving highway speeds. How do you get someone across Brayton using an undercrossing that is shorter without some kind of traffic calming feature like a roundabout? A pedestrian flashing beacon can be added, but there are all kinds of alternatives that we know do not work well on a high-speed facility. The peoples’ vision for what it is that they want may not be commensurate with the end results. Intuitively, the project team probably knows a lot of these things and did not go through five or six different alternatives. Even though they were only asked for one overcrossing and one undercrossing, they gave us another alternative. How many alternatives are we really asking them to do when some people from the technical side of the advisory committee can say those are not really viable.

MR. KOHLHASE noted that those are good points but just as important is the fact that, as explained by members of the project team and Mr. Junge, the only way to put any considerations on the table for those other alternatives is to go back to ground zero and start this project from scratch. Even then the outcome is uncertain. There is no way to guide this project to only non-motorized crossing solutions. That is not what the funding is for. If we think the thing to do is to provide not only the evaluation but a recommendation, he is open to changing his mind.

MR. LYON withdrew his motion. MS. ACTON seconded.

MR. LYON moved to ask DOT&PF to present this to the Policy Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee recommended supporting the project as currently designed. MR. KOHLHASE seconded.

CHAIR COY suggested that instead of making a recommendation, make a statement that says, “...and the Technical Advisory Committee is under the opinion that it is infeasible to replace the multimodal connection with a non-motorized connection.” In that case, it would not be a recommendation and would just be stating a technical opinion on the feasibility, which is what he understood from the request. It is up to the PC to make the final determination. Do we want to have it be a recommendation as was presented or do we want to have it as more of a statement?

MR. LYON expressed that his understanding was that the PC was looking for direction on whether or not we support it. That is why his motion was just to let them hear the discussion from DOT&PF and that we support it.

MR. JONGENELEN suggested a friendly amendment adding language at the end that the TAC finds that it is not feasible to make this change.

MS. ACTON believed the addition of the statement about feasibility is what the letter asked for.

In response to Chair Coy's request to restate the motion, MR. JONGENELEN noted the motion is to ask DOT&PF to present this topic to the PC and the TAC recommends supporting the project as currently designed based on a review of the feasibility presented at today's meeting.

CHAIR COY asked for clarification regarding the motion that the TAC is recommending that DOT&PF present this to the Policy Committee and finds that it is infeasible to replace the multimodal connection with a non-motorized connection.

MR. LYON suggested adding language to his motion that reads, "The TAC recommends supporting the project as currently designed based on the lack of feasibility of the non-motorized only design."

MR. KOHLHASE suggested a friendly amendment that reads, "...based on the infeasibility of implementing a non-motorized design."

MR. LYON accepted the friendly amendments to his motion to read, "Recommend DOT&PF present this topic to the PC and the TAC supports the project as currently designed due to the infeasibility of implementing a non-motorized only design. MR. KOHLHASE seconded.

***Hearing no objections, this motion passed.***

#### **b. 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #1**

MR. JONGENELEN presented TIP Amendment #1 noting this is necessary to update Table 2 – Roadway, Table 3 – Non-motorized, Table 4 – Plans and Studies, Table 5 - Congestion Mitigation Air Quality, Table 7 - HSIP, Table 8 - NHS, and Table 10 - Other Federal, State and Local Funded projects within the AMATS area.

Additional edits were added for the following:

- Add \$500k in FY24 for project CMAQ00013.
- Update project descriptions for RDY00020/21 to replace collector with local.
- Update illustrative project for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Ave with the correct termini.
- Update project RDY00006 phasing plan to show ROW in FY23 and U/C in FY24.
- Update project PLN00015 phase plan to show funding is for FY23 instead of FY24.

The Committee discussed the deadline for any changes to the TIP.

CHAIR COY opened the floor to public comments.

CHERYL RICHARDSON discussed the following:

1. Clarification on what changes were made that required an additional interagency review and why it took a whole month.
2. With regard to Assembly Resolution 254, she is not seeing the Complete Streets studies of the downtown arterials (Tudor, Northern Lights, Benson, and AC) in these amendments.

JAMES STARZEC referred to Mr. Baski's comment on the obligation cutoff date that program development had set for DOT&PF's managed projects. He has had conversations with the statewide MPO Coordinator and received clarification as it applies to AMATS projects. The reason they have that cutoff date is to allow for federal aid to reprogram those STIP funds to other projects, if they are not being obligated in a timely fashion. TIP funded projects are not reallocated at Headquarters, so that cutoff date is meaningless to an AMATS project. They made it clear to him that that is not a consideration.

NANCY PEASE discussed the following:

1. Asked the Committee to take action on Table 3 with the language that says, "The program will be balanced with areawide pavement replacement changes." She had looked at the deductions with money being taken out of pavement replacement and asked AMATS to use clearer language, and let people know what that means. It is great to boost Fish Creek and Downtown, but fix it first.
2. Asked the Committee to inquire further why the non-motorized inventory is not going to include undeveloped easements and rights-of-way. She is not satisfied with the explanation heard that the Municipal Right-of-Way Acquisition Section said this inventory is how they want it and that things are embedded in the GIS map layers. The problem is that only the Right-of-Way Department knows where they are. Planners, citizens, and neighbors do not know. The whole purpose was to put together an inventory of these hidden assets.
3. Appreciated the 45-day public comment period.

MR. LYON moved that the TAC recommend TIP Amendment #1 to the Policy Committee for release of a 45-day public comment period with the changes outlined by Mr. Jongenelen. MR. ALIMI seconded.

***Hearing no objections, this motion passed.***

*Ms. Acton left the meeting at 4:26 p.m.*

MR. LYON moved to extend the meeting to 4:45 p.m. MR. BOWLAND seconded.

***Hearing no objections, this motion passed.***



**c. VisionEval Metrics and Direction**

JEFF FRKONJA with RSG provided a PowerPoint presentation.

The Committee discussed state tax, VMT miles, and an additional alternative.

MR. LYON moved to extend the meeting to 4:55 p.m. MR. BOWLAND seconded.

***Hearing no objections, this motion passed.***

CHAIR COY opened the floor to public comments.

EMILY WEISER with Bike Anchorage discussed densification scenarios and asked if that is assuming Anchorage is going to be growing in population or redistributing the existing population.

CHERYL RICHARDSON noted that this VisionEval process is something that citizens have requested for decades and have found frustrating not having access to the information that is being presented. She asked the Committee to schedule a work session with the CAC and with Mr. Frkonja and his team.

MR. BASKI moved to recommend the Policy Committee move forward with the four scenarios as presented. MR. LINDAMOOD seconded.

***Hearing no objections, this motion passed.***

**6. PROJECT AND PLAN UPDATES**

*This item was moved to December.*

**a. AMATS Model Information**

**7. GENERAL INFORMATION - None**

**8. COMMITTEE COMMENTS - None**

**9. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None**

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

***CHAIR COY adjourned the meeting at 4:50 p.m.***