

MVP for Transportation Technical Committee Meeting

MEMBERS

Adeyemi Alimi, ADEC
Alex Strawn, MSB (**Chair**)
Ben White, ADOT&PF
Bob Charles Jr., Knik Tribe
Brian Winnestaffer, Chickaloon Native Village
Clint Adler, ADOT&PF
Crystal Smith, MSBSD
Dan Tucker, RSA Representative
Erich Schaal, City of Wasilla (**Vice Chair**)
Jennifer Busch, Public Transit
Jude Bilafer, City of Palmer
Kate Dueber, ARRC
Lawrence Smith, Trucking Industry Advocate
Randy Durham, MSB TAB
Stuart Leidner, Mobility Advocate
Tom Adams, MSB



Microsoft Teams
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Dial in by phone
+1 605-937-6140 United States, Sioux Falls
(844) 594-6237 United States (Toll-free)
Phone conference ID: 450 802 22#

Agenda

Tuesday, March 11th, 2025
2:00 – 4:00pm

Meeting Location

Musk Ox Farm
12850 E Archie Road, Palmer Alaska 99645
Hayloft / Classroom

1. Call to Order
2. Consent Agenda (**Action Item**)
 - a. Approval of the March 11th, 2025 Agenda
 - b. Approval of the February 11th, 2025, Minutes
3. Staff/Committee/Working Group Reports
 - Staff Report
 - a. Schedule of topics
4. Voices of the Visitors (Non-Action Items)
5. Action Items
 - a. Statewide Transportation Plan Amendment #2 MVP comments and questions review with Alaska DOT&PF staff and recommendation to the Policy Board to submit formal comments on MVP's suballocations.
6. Old Business
 - a. MSB Pass through Grant Agreement Update
 - b. Metropolitan Transportation Plan Contract Update
 - c. MSB Transit Program Update - Letter from the MSB to Alaska DOT&PF requesting an additional 30-day funding extension.
7. New Business
8. Other Issues
9. Informational Items
 - a. Transit Roundtable March 12th at noon via [Teams](#)
 - b. Statewide MPO Quarterly meeting and Peer Exchange Review March 3rd and 4th.
 - c. Staffing update

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- d. Index of Authorities Governing National Highway System Facilities in the Metropolitan Planning Area – Letter Alaska DOT&PF to FAST Planning.
- e. Response to January 22, 2025, Letter Regarding Anchorage Municipal Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS) Boundary and Operating Agreement Revision – Letter Alaska DOT&PF to AMATS

10. Technical Committee Comments

11. Adjournment

Next Scheduled MPO Technical Committee Meeting – Tuesday April 8th, 2025 from 2:00-4:00pm to be held at the Musk Ox Farm and Microsoft TEAMS.



MatSu Valley Planning (MVP) for Transportation
Metropolitan Planning Organization

MVP For Transportation Technical Committee

**Action Items
March 11th 2025**

Action: Motion to approve the March 11th Consent Agenda.

The consent agenda includes:

- Agenda for the March 11th Meeting
- Minutes from the February 11th Meeting

MOTION:

Yes
No
Abstain

Action: Motion recommendation to the Policy Board to submit formal comments
To Alaska DOT&PF on the State Transportation Improvement Program Amendment #2

MOTION:

Yes
No
Abstain

Staff Summary: MVP staff have reviewed the STIP Amendment #2, including the narrative, the allocation tables, and the fiscal constraint table. We have a few questions about our suballocations. We have asked the STIP Team to attend the TC meeting to answer our questions. If the STIP Team is able to answer/explain our questions, we may not need to submit formal comments.

Amendment #2 Questions:

MVP would like an accounting of our suballocations for STBG, CRP, and TAP for FFY24 and FFY25. We want to see what projects our funds are spent on and what funds are remaining.

In our Program of Projects, MVP asked for FFY24 funding to be carried over to FFY25. However, the narrative does not show that any of MVP's STBG, CRP, and TAP are being carried over to FFY25. Can this be explained?

The fiscal constraint tables contain ten projects titled Community-Driven Projects: MVP MPO. We would like to know what a community-driven project is.



In the fiscal constraint table, 5307 Urban Transit funding appears to be going to the Railroad within MVP's boundary. It is unclear where those funds are coming from. We would like to know if a split letter between MVP, FAST, and the Alaska Railroad was completed and where the MVP 5307 funding that is going to the railroad is coming from.

The fiscal constraint tables for MVP's STBG show no planned obligations in 26'. We are wondering how MVP can continue to work with the STIP team on our Program of Projects for FFY26 if there is no funding.

MVP's FY26 and FY27 Metro Planning funds show zero, while AMATS and FAST allocations are shown in each year of the STIP. Can the STIP Team explain why our funding is being displayed differently?

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Microsoft Teams meeting
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Minutes

Tuesday, February 11th, 2025
2:00 – 4:00pm

Meeting Location

Musk Ox Farm
12850 E Archie Road, Palmer Alaska 99645
Hayloft / Classroom

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 pm.

Members Present

Alex Strawn, MSB
Bob Charles Jr., Knik Tribe
Clint Adler, Alaska DOT&PF
Alimi Adeyemi, ADEC
Crystal Smith, MSBSD
Lawrence Smith, Trucking Industry Advocate
Stuart Leidner, Mobility Advocate
Randy Durham, MSB TAB
Ben White, Alaska DOT&PF
Dan Tucker, RSA Representative
Brian Winnestaffer, Chickaloon Native Village
Kate Dueber, ARRC
Erich Schaal, City of Wasilla

Members Absent

Brian Lindamood, ARRC
Jude Bilafer, City of Palmer
Tom Adams, MSB
Jennifer Busch, Public Transit

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Visitors Present

Kim Sollien, MVP MPO
Donna Gardino, Gardino Consulting Services
Adam Bradway, Alaska DOT&PF
Manny Eichholz, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Bianca Zibrat, MSB Long Range Planner
Julie Spackman, Long Range Planner MSB
Rebecca Skjothaug, MSB Planning Support Specialist
Megan Flory, RESPEC
Natalie Lyon, RESPEC
Laurie Cummings, HDR
James Marks, HDR
Luke Bowland, DOT&PF

2. Consent Agenda (Action Item)

Motion to approve the Consent agenda (Winnestaffer), seconded. Passed unanimously.

- a. Approval of the February 11th, 2025 Agenda
- b. Approval of the January 14th, 2025, Minutes

3. Staff/Committee/Working Group Reports

- **Staff Report**
 - a. **Schedule of topics**

Kim Sollien provided a staff report. The MSB Transportation Fair was a great event on 1/30/25 with great attendance, over 500 people. At the event, Kim met Manny Eichholz with Fish and Game who wanted to get involved in MVP activities. His expertise is bringing a wildlife management perspective to development projects. He is based in the Palmer office. Kim and the Policy Board decided not to sublet from RESPEC due to inability to sufficiently separate the two entities. Kim is looking at office space in Palmer. Once the Office Manager is hired, a part of their tasks will be to help identify and lease office space. Kim is working on transferring MVP's technology away from FAST Planning. The Policy Board asked for a portal on the MVP website. A portal can also be set up for the Technical Committee if desired. Indirect Cost Rate determination is in progress with DOT&PF, so we should receive a determination letter soon. MVP lawyer is reviewing the MSB pass-through grant agreement.

4. Voices of the Visitors (Non-Action Items)

None

5. Action Items

None

6. Old Business

- a. MSB Pass Through Grant Agreement Update
- b. Metropolitan Transportation Plan Contract Update

Very close to finalizing the MTP contract with RESPEC. Adam Bradway is working on the final letter documenting the negotiation process. The budget is within the right range. It took a little bit longer than expected but is coming to fruition. Kim noted having an MTP kickoff at the March meetings.

7. New Business

- a. **STIP Amendment #2 Update**

Ben White: STIP amendment #2 should be coming out the next couple weeks. DOT&PF is currently doing coordination with non-metropolitan areas.

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Brian Winnestaffer: How does DOT&PF get the word out beyond the MPOs, and how do they decide who to talk to?

Ben White: It's local governments, Tribes, incorporated communities, anyone on the list.

Kim Sollien: Will the MPOs also get that information about the STIP amendment before it is released?

Ben White: There shouldn't be any surprises in this STIP amendment. The TIP is now driving the STIP. So right now, there is a "black hole" for Anchorage and Fairbanks. We are still trying to figure out exactly what that looks like, because it is not something that we specifically are working on.

Kim Sollien: We found some errors in Amendment #1, when will we be able to review to see if those have been corrected?

Ben White: We have been trying to get our Project Delivery Plan updated. There are some items in the approval process that haven't been approved just yet. So, we should look at that as soon as possible.

Adam Bradway: Most of the Amendment #1 issues you identified should have been fixed. I have not seen the narrative portions yet or the fiscal constraint table.

Ben White: There shouldn't be major changes for this amendment. That is what we have been told. It was just project sheets and fiscal constraint table, nothing in the narrative.

Brian Winnestaffer: Since folks expect the MPO to be the source of information for local projects, can we add something like an interactive map to the website to show this information? Such as DOT&PF and other projects within the boundary?

Kim Sollien: Yes, we can do something like that. Especially if we can hire a Transportation Planner with GIS experience. If not, we have some GIS support from MSB. Alternatively, there is a small amount of funds set aside for obtaining interactive map assistance from a consultant.

Adam Bradway: We can also do a draft "practice-run" TIP to establish the format and process.

b. MVP tagline review and voting

Kim Sollien: At the MSB Transportation Fair, attendees were asked to vote on potential taglines for MVP that were developed using ChatGPT. We have a MentiMeter today for the Technical Committee and guests to vote on the taglines as well. It is hard to explain what the MPO does, so we wanted to develop an easy one-sentence explanation.

<TC members and guests voted via MentiMeter>

Kim Sollien: "We Make Getting Around Easy – Whether you Walk, Roll, or Ride" is currently in the lead. Through the MTP process, developing an official mission statement for MVP will likely be another task.

8. Other Issues

a. MSB Transit Update Presentation

Rebecca S. (MSB) provided the Transit Update Presentation.

- Valley Transit has funding until June of this year.
- Option A: Existing Transit \$3M/Year (\$1.5M FTA funding/\$1.5M Borough funding), 0.107 Mill Rate

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- Option B: 17% Reduction \$2.5M/Year (\$1.25M FTA funding/\$1.25M Borough), 0.090 mill rate, loss of 10,000 rides and 3 buses.
- Option c: 33% Reduction \$2M/Year (\$1M FTA/\$1M Borough), 0.072 mill rate, 21,000 riders lost, 5 total buses lost.
- Option D: 50% Reduction \$1.5M/Year (\$750,000 FTA/\$750,000 Borough), 0.054 mill rate, 31,000 riders lost, 8 vehicles removed from fleet.

Adam Bradway: Did you create an option for the total 5307 budget?

Rebecca Skjothaug: No, we did not. We were using the numbers we were given. The Assembly had been given the \$3M estimate previously. We did not think it would be a productive conversation to discuss expansion.

Dan Tucker: I am concerned that this analysis took numbers from the first quarter of 2024 and extrapolated from that. It should go back several years and look at numbers for full years.

Brian Winnestaffer: Does Valley Transit keep track of missed demand opportunities?

Bianca Zibrat: No, we were not given that information. We are still waiting on full 2024 data from Valley Transit.

Brian Winnestaffer: I hope the transit providers start tracking this information.

Donna Gardino (in chat): Do you know what impact a reduction in service would have on travel times and congestion?

Rebecca Skjothaug: Camden did the analysis. Her estimation of traffic and congestion was pretty low, on how much the buses actually help reduce traffic. We can share that document from Camden.

Donna Gardino: What if scheduled service locally increased? What impact would that have on traffic and congestion? For example, rides to Walmart?

Rebecca Skjothaug: Since that service has never been offered, we do not have that data, and it would be a guess. For example, rides from Palmer to Wasilla.

Adam Bradway: There was a widely read news article about DOT&PF projects in the Mat-Su, which talked about transit demand being increased during those projects.

Rebecca Skjothaug: There are a lot of gaps in the information currently related to transit in the Mat-Su. The RFP will be a good opportunity to collect more data to fill those gaps.

Rebecca Skjothaug: Provided overview of the timeline.

- January – Request for Interest (RFI)
- February/March – RFP (likely released Monday or Wednesday of next week)
 - Meeting with FTA this week will determine if it is 1 or 2 RFPs.
- March – Manager's Budget
- April – Proposed Assembly Budget and public comment period
- June 1st – Award Contracts
- July 1st – Begin Service

Brian Winnestaffer: There is a need to coordinate with rural areas and Anchorage since Mat-Su transit will be bringing people into their areas for jobs. Is there anything AMATs can do to support transit in the valley?

Rebecca Skjothaug: There is a small ride share service that exists.

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Kim Sollien: Has the MSB Manager disclosed which option he is leaning towards supporting?

Rebecca Skjothaug: Maybe Option C? Some Assembly members are for it, and some are against it. They have been asking lots of good questions.

Kim Sollien: I like how you showed the taxpayer mill rate for each transit option. Has that analysis also been done for road infrastructure upgrades to show all improvements as an entire system?

Rebecca Skjothaug: Jason Ortiz suggested doing so. We have that information for 5307 funds, but we haven't done the analysis yet.

Kim Sollien: What about for MSB-bonded projects?

James Marks (in chat): There was a national study, and a corresponding study done at Alaska DOT&PF, "the Economic Impacts of Transit" that quantifies not just cost but benefits to economy and individuals from transit.

9. Informational Items

- a. MSB Corridor Access Management Plan for Bogard [Matanuska-Susitna Borough - Proposed Bogard Seldon CAMP Revised 01 30 2025](#)

Julie Spackman, Long Range Planner MSB provided an overview of the public involvement process for the plan.

Brian Winnestaffer: Coordination question. DOT&PF has a project in that same area. Whose jurisdiction is that?

Julie Spackman: The MSB plan is a bigger picture, long range vision for the entire area.

Alex Strawn: MSB has been working closely with DOT&PF for the entire project. This is a long-term vision for this ROW, not a design project.

- b. **Transit Roundtable February 12th at noon via [Teams](#)**

Kim Sollien: Send me an email if you would like to attend.

- c. **FHWA/DOT/MPO Peer Exchange overview of concerns, needs, actions, and next steps**

Kim Sollien: MVP had good representation at the peer exchange. On day 1, the 3 MPOs gave presentations about their history and concerns. Kim talked about consistent communication regarding the STIP. Jackson (FAST Planning) and Aaron (AMATs) went into more detail about challenges with their TIPs and coordination with DOT&PF. The Lower 48 partner MPOs gave presentations about their organization and structure and how they work with their DOTs on TIP amendments, STIP amendments, etc. The other MPOs are not having the same challenges Alaska has because they work closely with their DOTs. They also each have long range plans that allow them to plan 10 years out. In Alaska, we have great relationships with our local DOT&PF staff, that is not our issue.

<Kim Sollien shared the AK Peer Exchange Action Items spreadsheet>

Donna Gardino: The MPOs we heard from had a set schedule that they stick to every year, for when the STIP is coming out. The MPOs work backwards from that schedule to determine when they need to develop the TIP. It was clear that there is a total lack of a schedule here in Alaska, which is hampering our efforts. They also had great communication

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from the DOT&PF about project updates. They'd receive those updates from the Project Managers, and there were deadlines for when no more changes to project estimates, etc., are allowed. This ensured limited changes between the draft and final versions of the STIP. Communication is a huge discussion topic that we need to work on, not with local DOT&PF staff, but with those "driving the STIP train."

Crystal Smith: Education was a big component. It was clear that education was a big priority for the Lower 48 MPOs, and they took public comment periods very seriously.

Adeyemi Alimi: Active communication, schedule, and trust building are my three takeaways.

Adam Bradway: The Lower 48 MPOs and DOTs are doing a lot of longer-range planning. Additionally, they limited changes to projects in the first few years of the STIP.

Donna Gardino: It was very clear that the projects within the boundary will be shown in the TIPs and not the STIP. It was also clear there is still resistance at higher levels of DOT&PF about this. The MPOs should have a similar memo to the PL funds memo for capital funds. Having this ahead of time would allow it to be clarified before it is released to the public. There is a trust issue that is hindering this.

Kim Sollien: Provided some background on the current STIP and challenges. It is lucky that MVP doesn't have a TIP yet, because it has been more challenging for FAST Planning and AMATs, who already have TIPs. There will be a follow-up peer exchange meeting in 3 months to check in on action items. There will also be a regular quarterly MPO meeting coming up.

Kim Sollien: In the Lower 48, the local governments are allowed to manage the construction of projects, unlike here. That would allow for example, borough staff, to be paid from federal funds to manage those projects. Luke Bowland is going to work on a local public agency (LPA) agreement to try this.

Ben White: This has been tried in the past in Anchorage. One challenge is that if anything goes wrong, the State of Alaska must pay for the costs. Sometimes the local governments don't have the understanding to carry out these projects. DOT&PF must do a lot of "hand holding" since rules change, even daily. The end responsibility always remains with the State of Alaska.

Brian Winnestaffer: With an LPA, which parts would the local government be doing?

Ben White: Preliminary design work, environmental, and some ROW can be transferred to the local government. Construction and construction management will likely remain with DOT&PF.

Kim Sollien: There is currently no STIP schedule, which makes it very difficult for the MPOs to plan their TIPs. That is one issue that will be worked on. Additionally, the local DOT&PF staff don't currently have access to all components of the STIP so they can't share it with the MPOs. DOT&PF will be working on that internally. DOT&PF (Lauren) is going to provide guidance on TIP format.

James Marks (in chat): MPO and RTPO require enabling legislation, which we have the former but not the latter. Does LPA (a formal FHWA construct) require enabling legislation? Maybe a follow-up for Ben...

Ben White (in chat, in response to James Marks): This is one thing we are looking into...FHWA has indicated that our Stewardship and Oversight agreement would be the mechanism that they would need plus agreements with the local public agency.

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Brian Winnestaffer: Who holds the DOT&PF's feet to the fire for the STIP? For TIPs, it doesn't seem as strict if there is sufficient communication.

Adam Bradway: Yes, it must be specific and aligned, especially for the year that you are in.

Kim Sollien: MnDOT has their own 20-year plan of projects. This allows them to know their priorities. Does DOT&PF have a long-range plan for projects? Is there a 10-year approved project list? Hopefully, we will hear more about what DOT&PF's long-range project list is and if that will happen in the future.

Kim Sollien: The MPOs are going to propose some other ways to communicate with DOT&PF and the local communities. We want to make sure that from the MPO side, the flow of information and schedules is clear. Going to work on this at the quarterly meeting this year.

10. Technical Committee Comments

Bob Charles: Reminder to Kim, Natalie, Donna, and Elise to have MVP registered in the system for award management at SAM.gov. Go to the site, and there is a manual to do that. There is paperwork required to register. Sent a copy of FAST's registration to see how they got theirs.

Brian Winnestaffer: They opened up Stringfield Road; it's great!

Dan Tucker: Sounds like the Peer Exchange was a valuable experience

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:57 pm.

Next Scheduled MPO Technical Committee Meeting – Tuesday, March 11th from 2:00-4:00pm to be held at the Musk Ox Farm and Microsoft TEAMS.



Staff Report February 2025

FFY25/26 UPWP Tasks

TASK 100 A UPWP

Task 100 B Metropolitan Transportation Plan

- Met with Adam Bradway to discuss the MTP contract cost proposal that RESPEC updated to meet our cost expectations

TIP Scoring Criteria

Complete Streets Policy

Task 100 C TransCad Modeling

TASK 100 D Household Travel Survey

- Met with Adam Bradway to talk about the scope of work and RFP for the Household travel survey

TASK 100 E Transportation Improvement Program

TASK 100 F Update and Implementation of the Public Participation Plan and Title VI Plan

TASK 100 G Support Services

Budget Management

Meetings

- Met with the Project Team weekly to prep for the TC and PB meetings and develop packet materials
- Met with FAST, AMATS and ADOT MPO coordinators to discuss action items from the Peer Exchange and talk about the March Quarterly meeting in Fairbanks
- Met with Deb Stockbrook, Internal Revenue Chief, and Tracie Paladijczuk with ADOT&PF to go over MVP's organizational formation history so they could draft the letter allowing us to use the Federal IDCR.
- Met with ADOT&PF to go over their new Functional Classification matrix. MVP does not have an ArcGIS account yet, so ADOT&PF will need to be more hands-on with reviewing the list of roads that are proposing to be reclassified.
- Met with Alex Strawn to discuss MPO rules and regulations and funding categories
- Attended the ADOT&PF Tribal Transportation Monthly meeting



Staff Report February 2025

- Attended FAST Plannings Policy Board meeting to listen to the discussion about the Commissioners letter asserting ADOT's authority and the need to update the Operating Agreement
- Hosted the First Transit Roundtable for Providers, MSB, and ADOT&PF staff

Staffing

- Advertised staff positions with Foraker Group
- Sent Jackson Fox, the MVP Director hire letter and asked to discuss my transition timeline.
- Requested FAST Policy Board consider extending our fiscal sponsorship for an additional month. Our agreement ends in April, and we may need until May to get everything transitioned.
- Scheduled an interview for the Office and Communications Manager
- Drafted interview questions for the office/communications manager

Office Management

- Set up a billing account with Tech Wise to begin the IT transfer and file migration
- ADOT&PF approved Indirect Cost Rate
- the IT transfer has begun
- Set up website security program cloudflare
- Worked with a health insurance broker to initiate quotes for health benefits.
- Opened a bank account with MVFCU
- After waiting nearly three months for a quote on insurance from a broker called Integra Insurance Brokers in Wasilla, they are working on a quote for us.
- Met with FAST planning to discuss my transition from a FAST employee to an MVP employee
- Met with MVFCU to get a new debit card reissued the one they gave us did not work
- Met with Foraker to determine which version of QuickBooks Online we should buy

Correspondence

Nonprofit Filings and reports

Organizational Documents

Agency Relationships

- Organized notes/action steps from the Peer Exchange to present to the TC and PB
- Developed a powerpoint for the Senate Transportation Committee about STIP coordination

Contract Management



Staff Report February 2025

- Met with Mike Schecter of Ashburn and Mason to go over his comments on the MSB grant agreement.

Requests from the Policy Board and Technical Committee directed to staff

- Bob Charles requested that MVP register for a System for Awards Management (SAM) number. Staff reviewed the application and all the documents required to apply/register but have not applied.

Strategic Planning

Short-Range and Tactical Planning

Long-Range Planning

Funding / Budget

- Reviewing the STIP Amendment #2 to understand what changes were made, if MVP's Program of Projects was utilized to program MVP's allocation and started to draft a memo to review with the policy board.

Training

TASK 200 A MSB Public Transit Planning Support

- Hosted Transit Roundtable
- Met with MSB Planners to discuss the need for an additional 90 extension for the Transit Program development and to brainstorm options. I suggested the MSB could offer VT a grant to cover service for 90 days while MSB staff work on the program and contractor selection, assuming the Assembly approves a funding match.
- Shared MVP's approved program of projects to use in their FTA grant application for 5307 funding.

TASK 200 B Transit Development Plan

TASK 300 A MVP Sign Management Plan

TASK 300 B MVP Advanced Project Definition

TASK 300 C MVP Streetlight and Intersection Management Plan

TASK 300 D Pavement Asset Management Plan



Staff Report February 2025

MVP MPO Meeting Schedule Topics

May 2024

- Articles of Incorporation Restated PB approved and signed
- STIP Program of Projects Work Session
- Ready to receive Federal Operation Funding – Spring 2024
- Recommend the updated Title VI plan for Public Comment
- Approve Metropolitan Transportation Plan scope of work
- Elect TC officers

June 2024

- TC Recommend and PB Approval of MVP program of projects STIP amendment for funding in FF24 and FFY25
- Review and Approve 3C's comments memo
- Review and Approve Proxy Voting change to the bylaws
- Recommend FY25 & FY26 UPWP for 30-day public comment June 19 to July 19
- Review and Adopt PM program policy for the P&P

July 2024

- 2nd Review Fiscal Policy
- 2nd Review social media Policy
- Review Bylaw changes
 - Proxy voting
 - Open Meetings Act
- Draft SS-4 to IRS for EIN
 - Conflict of interest
 - Officers & election minutes
 - Whistleblower Policy
- AOI resubmission
- STIP Amendment Update
- Program of Projects Update move everything to FFY2025
- Update the FFY25/26 UPWP
- Review FY 25 & 26 PL award letter, make necessary amendments to the budget

August 2024

- ADOT request match Funds from MSB for the MTP and PL funding
- Review and Adopt Fiscal Policy
- Review and Adopt Social Media Policy
- Review and Approve Updated Bylaws
- Review and Adopt Whistleblower Policy
- Review and Adopt Conflict of interest Certification form

MVP TC & PB meeting topics
schedule November 2024

- Review and Approve Title VI plan
- Review and Approve FFY 25 and 26 UPWP, send to DOT to forward to FHWA for approval
- Review and Approve Fiscal Policy

September 2024

- Review and Adopt Annual Budget
- Review Match requirements
- Secure Foraker CPA for Accounting support
- Research Health Plans
- Research payroll services
- Research liability insurance
- Update website with approved MVP organizational documents

October 2024

- MSB CAMP presentation Julie Spackman
- Finalize scope for Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- Call ADOT about the status of the MVP improvement program Scope, Schedule, and Budget Plus for project state and ask for match and maintenance agreements (create a presentation of the projects)
- Review and Submit SS-4 to IRS for EIN and submit with
 - Three-year annual budget
 - Officers' information and elections memo
 - Conflict of Interest policy
- IRS Letter received-

November 2024

- Review and Approve Personnel and Administrative Policies
- Send scope of work, schedule and estimate request to ADOT for Pavement, Streetlight, Intersection and Sign management plans
- Share Membership fee Invoice with TC and PB Members
- Complete descriptions for MVP staff positions Office and Communicaitons Manager, Transportation Planning Manager, Transit Planning Manager and GIS/Data Analyst (contractor)
- Attend ADOT Federal Funding Overview Work Session
- Draft and Submit final report for the FFY 2024 UPWP
- Update Proxy Voting Policy in the Bylaws
- Review and Approve Personnel Policies
- Review and Approve Records Retention, Public Records Request and Website Policy

December 2024

- Submit Final FFY24 UPWP Annual Report
- Hire Executive Director

MVP TC & PB meeting topics
schedule November 2024

- Secure Accounting Consultant
-
- Join TechSoup for discount computer software Quickbooks and Adobe Pro
- Finalize TC and PB meeting Calendar
- Rent Meeting Space for the next 6 months
- Send Invoices to PB members for Membership Fees

January 2025

- Hire Executive Director
- Secure Legal Support
- Secure IT support
- FFY25-26 UPWP Q1 report Submitted
- Transportation Alternatives Program manual presentation
- Policy Board adopts Corporate Resolution to open a bank account

February 2025

- Report management for the UPWP, Title VI, Staff, Finance, Minutes, Public Notices
- Review and Approve Grant agreement comments between MVP and the MSB for Alaska DOT&PF's membership fees and other MVP startup costs
- STIP amendment #2 review
- Check in with ADOT Civil Rights Office to discuss title VI training and reporting
- Secure Letter from ADOT&PF on the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
- Open Bank account with \$1
- Advertise for Office / Communications Manager and Transportation Planner Positions

March 2025

- Secure Payroll, workers comp, and employee benefit management services
- Secure Insurances
 - Directors
 - General Liability
 - Commercial Auto
 - Personal Property for office equipment
- Apply for State and City Business Licenses
- Begin Update to the Public Participation Plan & Title VI related to MTP development
- Secure MTP consultant
- Review, approve and submit STIP Amendment #2 comments
- Submit questions/edits to MSB on the Grant Agreement contract for the legislative contract
- Hire Office/Communications Manager
- Initiate Financial Protocols with CPA and build out the QuickBooks chart of accounts and get billing and reimbursement protocols established.

April 2025

- CRP plan review the was developed outside of consultation with the MPOs/ MVP priorities
- CMAQ funding review
- TIP Funding Policy to Technical Committee and Policy Board
- Grandfather agreements with ADOT&PF
- Review and Approve the ADOT performance-based approaches criteria to incorporate into our planning as required in 23 CFR 450.306(d). ADOT&PF will provide the MOU to MVP about the targets that we can accept or choose to adopt our own.
- Review Recommend the Public Participation Plan Update for Public Comment 45-day
- Begin MTP, Household Survey, and Travel Model
- Draft scope of services for the Audit and 990 filing

May 2025

June 2025

July 2025

August 2025

- Title VI annual compliance report

September 2025

October 2025

November 2025

December 2025

- Travel Demand Model

January 2026

- Performance measures

July 2026

- MTP and Complete Streets Completion

October 2026

- TIP Completion

December 2026

- New MPOs should have a formally adopted MTP and TIP by **December 29, 2026**

MVP TC & PB meeting topics
schedule November 2024



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

Office of the Borough Manager

350 East Dahlia Avenue • Palmer, AK 99645

Phone (907) 861-8689 • Fax (907) 861-8669

Mike.Brown@matsugov.us

February 20, 2025

Via Email: ryan.anderson@alaska.gov

Mr. Ryan Anderson, P.E.
Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

Re: Request for 90-Day Extension of Federal Transit Administration 5311 Funding

Dear Commissioner Anderson:

On behalf of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, I am writing to formally request a 90-day extension for the Federal Transit Administration 5311 funding allocated to our local transit program because of our newly formed Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

Due to the tight timeline for the grant application process and the budget adoption by our Assembly as well as the distribution of contractual funds to a potential new service provider, we must request an extension of funding through September 30, 2025. The current funding for operations is set to conclude on June 30, 2025, and the extension will ensure the continued provision of transit services within the Mat-Su Borough urbanized area.

This extension to September 30, 2025 will also provide the transition period for the potential contracted service provider to implement the required steps for a seamless continuation of transit operations.

Our current projected timeline is the following:

- February 21, 2025: Grant application process initiated
- March 11, 2025: Advertise RFP
- April 7, 2025: Grant application finalized and submitted to FTA
- April 15, 2025: RFP advertisement closes
- April 30, 2025: Finalize selection process from RFP
- May 20, 2025: Earliest anticipated FTA approval of the grant application
- June 16, 2025: Earliest anticipated estimated date for the grant agreement after revision by the Borough and the FTA legal department.
- June 17, 2025: Introduce legislation to the Assembly to accept and appropriate the funding and scope of work
- July 15, 2025: Assembly public hearing to adopt legislation

Providing Outstanding Borough Services to the Matanuska-Susitna Community

Due to this extremely tight timeframe and the potential for a contractor to relocate from the lower 48, we respectfully request your consideration and approval of this extension to September 30, 2025.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Brown
Borough Manager

cc: Eric Taylor, Transit Program Manager, Alaska Department of Transportation
Adam Moser, Program Development Chief, Alaska Department of Transportation
Susan Fletcher, FTA Region 10 Regional Administrator
Edna DeVries, Mayor, Mat-Su Borough
Todd Smoldon, Director, Mat-Su Office of Governor Dunleavy
Kim Sollien, Executive Director, MVP for Transportation



February 11, 2025

Jerry Cleworth
Policy Board Chair, FAST Planning
100 Cushman Street, Suite 105
Fairbanks, AK 99701

RE: Index of Authorities Governing National Highway System Facilities in the Metropolitan Planning Area

Dear Chair Cleworth:

Pursuant to your request at the December 18, 2024, FAST Planning Policy Board meeting, we are providing the attached summary of legal authorities governing National Highway System (NHS) facilities within the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). This index includes controlling state and federal requirements and is intended to serve as a readily accessible reference to facilitate discussions among the Policy Board, the Technical Committee, and the public. The index is expandable, so please advise if any additional topics related to Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)-State coordination should be included.

The legal authorities governing the inclusion of NHS projects in planning documents, as well as the selection or rejection of NHS projects within the MPA, are the primary focus of this summary. From the State's perspective, a key source of friction and delay in the planning process is the MPO's assertion of authority over the inclusion of NHS projects in planning documents. NHS projects are per se regionally significant under federal law and, as such, must be incorporated into the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) in accordance with governing federal regulations. While both the State and the MPO have a duty to cooperate in the development of the TIP and STIP, federal law mandates that this cooperation be directed toward ensuring the inclusion of the State's selected NHS projects in these planning documents, rather than their exclusion.

Additionally, federal regulations do not limit the definition of "regionally significant" projects to NHS facilities. As such, MPO projects may also benefit from this classification. The governing regulations further establish that the State selects all NHS projects for inclusion in the TIP and STIP in coordination with the MPO. The State has consistently considered the MPO responsible for the selection of non-NHS projects for inclusion in the TIP and, subsequently, the STIP, in coordination with the State. However, under 23 U.S.C. § 134(k)(5) and 23 C.F.R. § 450.332(b), federal law directs that, in metropolitan areas with populations under 200,000, the State, in cooperation with the MPO, shall select highway projects.

Under 23 C.F.R. § 450.104, an MPO serving an urbanized area with a population of 200,000 or more is designated as a Transportation Management Area (TMA) and is subject to additional federal planning and programming requirements. AMATS qualifies as a TMA, whereas FAST, with a population under 50,000, remains a non-TMA MPO. Historically, the State has not distinguished between AMATS as a TMA and FAST as a smaller MPO in terms of project selection authority for NHS projects.

Given the challenges that have recently emerged in project selection and planning, the Policy Board may find it beneficial to explore opportunities to enhance regulatory clarity, project efficiency, and technical support. Federal law allows flexibility in how State-MPO coordination is structured, and there may be ways to refine this process to ensure greater alignment with state and federal requirements while continuing to support regional transportation priorities. A more clearly defined role for DOT&PF in technical planning and programming could help streamline coordination and improve long-term planning outcomes. If the Policy Board sees value in strengthening technical programming partnerships, DOT&PF remains committed to providing expertise and support in a way that best serves the region's needs while respecting the autonomy of the Policy Board.

The MPO's assertion of authority to include or exclude projects from the TIP within the MPA has disrupted what was previously a cooperative highway planning process and is impeding the State's project delivery. To restore clarity regarding decision-making authority over NHS routes within the MPA, the State requires an update to the operating agreement. Federal regulations mandate such an update when there is a substantial change in decision-making authority or responsibility. The State considers the MPO's continuing assertion of authority over NHS routes within the MPA to constitute a "substantial change," necessitating a process to establish and document the procedures governing these newly claimed authorities.

The attached index also summarizes legal processes under state and federal law that permit member municipalities to assume responsibility for portions of the NHS or specific components of project development, delivery, or maintenance. DOT&PF can collaborate with the MPO and member municipalities to transfer such authorities and obligations or to relinquish, modify, or review NHS routes within the MPA. The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) can collaborate with the MPO and member municipalities to transfer such authorities and obligations or to relinquish, modify, or review NHS routes within the MPA. However, any such changes must be mutually agreed upon and formally documented to delineate responsibilities for specific transportation facilities and the corresponding planning processes.

FAST Planning's proposed MPA boundary expansion includes a portion of the Richardson Highway, and the FAST Planning Executive Director continues to claim authority to include or exclude any highway project within the MPA. Until the MPO and its members establish a common understanding of planning responsibilities for the NHS and complete the transfer of any NHS authorities in alignment with that understanding, DOT&PF cannot recommend the Governor's approval of an expanded MPA that includes additional NHS miles. We acknowledge that the Technical Committee, on December 4, 2024, voted to recommend that the Policy Committee table indefinitely the proposed revisions to the operating agreement. However, a substantial change in decision-making authority or responsibility necessitates documentation in an updated operating agreement. Any proposal to indefinitely defer discussion of the MPO's newly asserted authorities or to disregard procedural requirements arising from those assertions is non-cooperative and contradicts applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. To ensure compliance, the State and all public transportation providers must cooperatively determine their mutual responsibilities in administering the metropolitan transportation planning process.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to enhance communication and cooperation among all entities engaged in delivering this critical surface transportation planning process.

Sincerely,


Katherine Keith, PMP, PMI-ACP
Northern Region Director (Acting)
Deputy Commissioner

Incl.: Index of Authorities.pdf

Cc: AMATS Policy Committee, Chair, Sean Holland, sean.holland@alaska.gov, MVP Policy Board Chair, Mayor Glenda Ledford, gledford@ci.wasilla.ak.us, DOT&PF MPO Coordinators: Randi Bailey, randi.bailey@alaska.gov, Adam Bradway, adam.bradway@alaska.gov, James Starzec, james.starzec@alaska.gov

INDEX OF AUTHORITIES REGARDING NHS FACILITIES WITHIN MPAs

Under State law, the State of Alaska is mandated to maintain full responsibility and authority over the State highway system. The State of Alaska, through DOT&PF, is similarly obligated to plan, construct, and maintain the network of highways linking the cities and communities in the various regions of the State. The highway system linking the various regions of State of Alaska has been designated as part of the National Highway System.

1. State must construct and maintain state highway system – [AS 19.10.030](#)
2. DOT&PF obligated to plan construct and maintain the regional NHS – [AS 19.05.125](#)
3. Alaska’s regional routes have been designated part of NHS – [23 USC 103\(b\)](#) and [Maps](#)

State and Federal laws and regulations mandate a collaborative approach to transportation planning within metropolitan areas. However, these laws and regulations do not grant a Metropolitan Planning Organization power or authority to veto or “de-select” the State’s selected NHS projects that are located within a municipal planning area; nor do these laws and regulations grant the State the power to veto or “de-select” the MPO’s non-NHS projects located within the municipal planning area.

4. MPO selects non-NHS projects in the MPA – [23 USC 134\(k\)\(5\)\(A\)](#)
5. State selects NHS projects in the MPA – [23 USC 134\(k\)\(5\)\(B\)](#)
6. TIP shall contain “All regionally significant projects” – [23 CFR 450.326\(f\)](#)
7. STIP shall contain “All regionally significant projects” – [23 CFR 450.218\(h\)](#)
8. The State’s NHS projects are “regionally significant projects” – [23 CFR 450.104](#)

Re-designation of a MPO, including updates to its operating agreement, is required when there is a substantial change in decision-making authority or responsibility. The MPO’s assertion of selection or “de-selection” authority over NHS projects located in the MPA is a substantial change in decision-making authority. The extent of the MPO’s new change in decision-making authority or responsibility over NHS projects or routes, and the procedures to implement any new authority and responsibility must be documented in writing.

9. Operating agreement must be amended with substantial change in decision-making authority – [23 CFR 450.310\(j\)](#)
10. Periodic review of operating agreement required – [23 CFR 450.314\(b\)](#)
11. Division of responsibility over NHS projects located in the MPA must be in writing – [23 CFR 450.314\(a\)](#)

State law authorizes DOT&PF to delegate planning authority over NHS projects located in the MPA, and Federal law even authorizes the State to propose modifications of the NHS, although both actions must be done by cooperative agreement between the MPO and the State.

12. Municipality may request planning authority for NHS corridors within the MPA– [AS 19.20.015](#)
13. State can delegate NHS planning authority to municipality – [AS 19.15.030](#).
14. State can propose any modification to the NHS, in cooperation with local and regional officials. [23 USC 103\(b\)\(3\)](#).

The MPO's metropolitan transportation plan, from which it selects its projects for inclusion into the TIP, is required to include "major roadways" and smaller transportation facilities to function as an integrated metropolitan transportation system. State and Federal laws and regulations do not contemplate NHS projects, and similar corridor projects that connect rural and urban areas, as the type of transportation facilities for which the MPOs have primary decision making responsibilities.

15. MPO's MTP identifies facilities that function as an integrated metro system that serves regional transportation functions. [23 USC 134\(i\)\(2\)\(A\)](#):
16. MPO's MTP shall include facilities that function as an integrated metro system that serves regional transportation functions. [23 CFR 450.324\(f\)](#):
17. Municipality shall ensure proper integration of State highway connections in municipal highway plan – [AS 19.20.080](#)

1. [AS 19.10.030](#). The department is responsible for the construction and maintenance of the state highway system. [\(Return\)](#)
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2. [AS 19.05.125](#). The purpose of AS 19.05 - AS 19.25 is to establish a highway **department capable of carrying out a highway planning, construction, and maintenance program that will provide** a common defense to the United States and the state, **a network of highways linking together cities and communities throughout the state** (thereby contributing to the development of commerce and industry in the state, and aiding the extraction and utilization of its resources), and otherwise improve the economic and general welfare of the people of the state. [\(Return\)](#)
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3. [23 USC 103\(b\)](#) National Highway System.--(1) Description.--The National Highway System consists of the highway routes and connections to transportation facilities that shall-(A) serve major population centers, international border crossings, ports, airports, public transportation facilities, and other intermodal transportation facilities and other major travel destinations; (B) meet national defense requirements; and (C) serve interstate and interregional travel and commerce.[\(Return\)](#)
-

4. [23 USC 134\(k\)\(5\)](#) "Selection of Projects. (A) In general.--**All Federally funded projects** carried out within the boundaries of a metropolitan planning area serving a transportation management area under this title (**excluding projects carried out on the National Highway System**) or under chapter 53 of title 49 **shall be selected for implementation from the approved TIP by the metropolitan planning organization** designated for the area in consultation with the State and any affected public transportation operator." [\(Return\)](#)
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5. [23 USC 134\(k\)\(5\)\(B\)](#): "**National Highway System projects**.--Projects carried out within the boundaries of a metropolitan planning area serving a transportation management area on the National Highway System **shall be selected for implementation from the approved TIP by the State** in cooperation with the metropolitan planning organization designated for the area." [\(Return\)](#)
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6. [23 CFR 450.326\(f\)](#) "**The TIP shall contain all regionally significant projects** requiring an action by the FHWA or the FTA whether or not the projects are to be funded under title 23 U.S.C. Chapters 1 and 2 or title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 (e.g., addition of an interchange to the Interstate System with State, local, and/or private funds and congressionally designated projects not funded under 23 U.S.C. or 49 U.S.C. Chapter

53). For public information and conformity purposes, the TIP shall include all regionally significant projects proposed to be funded with Federal funds other than those administered by the FHWA or the FTA, as well as all regionally significant projects to be funded with non- Federal funds.” [\(Return\)](#)

7. [23 CFR 450.218\(h\)](#): “**The STIP shall contain all regionally significant projects** requiring an action by the FHWA or the FTA whether or not the projects are to be funded with 23 U.S.C. Chapters 1 and 2 or title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 funds (e.g., addition of an interchange to the Interstate System with State, local, and/or private funds, and congressionally designated projects not funded under title 23 U.S.C. or title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53). For informational and conformity purposes, the STIP shall include (if appropriate and included in any TIPs) all regionally significant projects proposed to be funded with Federal funds other than those administered by the FHWA or the FTA, as well as all regionally significant projects to be funded with non-Federal funds.” [\(Return\)](#)
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8. [23 CFR 450.104](#): “**Regionally significant project means a transportation project** (other than projects that may be grouped in the TIP and/or STIP or exempt projects as defined in EPA's transportation conformity regulations ([40 CFR part 93, subpart A](#))) **that is on a facility that serves regional transportation needs** (such as access to and from the area outside the region; major activity centers in the region; major planned developments such as new retail malls, sports complexes, or employment centers; or transportation terminals) and would normally be included in the modeling of the metropolitan area's transportation network. At a minimum, this includes all principal arterial highways and all fixed guideway transit facilities that offer an alternative to regional highway travel.” [\(Return\)](#)
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9. [23 CFR 450.310\(j\)](#): “**Redesignation of an MPO** (in accordance with the provisions of this section) **is required** whenever the existing MPO proposes to make: ... (2) A substantial change in the decisionmaking authority or responsibility of the MPO, or in decisionmaking procedures established under MPO by-laws.” [\(Return\)](#)
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10. [23 CFR 450.314\(b\)](#): “The MPO, the State(s), and the providers of public transportation should periodically review and update the agreement, as appropriate, to reflect effective changes.” [\(Return\)](#)
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11. [23 CFR 450.314\(a\)](#). The MPO, the State(s), and the providers of public transportation **shall cooperatively determine their mutual responsibilities** in carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process. These responsibilities shall be **clearly identified in written agreements** among the MPO, the State(s), and the providers of public transportation serving the MPA. [...] [\(Return\)](#)

12. [AS 19.20.015](#). Local control of state transportation corridors. **(a) A municipality, by resolution of its governing body, may request of the department the assumption of the department's responsibilities relating to planning of transportation corridors that are to be located within the boundaries or operating area of the municipality.** ... The parties may by mutual agreement provide for joint or cooperative assumption of responsibilities by the department and the municipality. [\(Return\)](#)

13. [AS 19.15.030](#). Participation by municipality in federal highway construction. When a federal-aid highway is routed through a municipality, it may participate in the financing, planning, construction, acquisition of right-of-way, and maintenance of the highway **in the manner and proportion the department determines is reasonable and proper.** [\(Return\)](#)

14. [23 USC 103\(b\)\(3\)](#). Modifications to NHS.—(A) In general.—The Secretary may make any modification to the National Highway System, including any modification consisting of a connector to a major intermodal terminal or the withdrawal of a road from that system, that is proposed by a State if the Secretary determines that the modification—

- (i) meets the criteria established for the National Highway System under this title after the date of enactment of the MAP-21; and
- (ii) (I) enhances the national transportation characteristics of the National Highway System; or
- (II) in the case of the withdrawal of a road, is reasonable and appropriate.

(B) Cooperation.—(i) In general.— In proposing a modification under this paragraph, a State shall cooperate with local and regional officials. (ii) Urbanized areas.— In an urbanized area, the local officials shall act through the metropolitan planning organization designated for the area under section 134. [\(Return\)](#)

15. [23 USC 134\(i\)\(2\)\(A\)](#) "Identification of transportation facilities [for the MTP].- (i) In general.-An identification of **transportation facilities** (including major roadways, public transportation facilities, intercity bus facilities, multimodal and intermodal facilities, nonmotorized transportation facilities, and intermodal connectors) **that should function as an integrated metropolitan transportation system**, giving emphasis to those facilities that serve important national and regional transportation functions." [\(Return\)](#)

16. [23 CFR 450.324\(f\)](#): “**The metropolitan transportation plan shall, at a minimum, include:** ... (2) Existing and proposed **transportation facilities** (including major roadways, public transportation facilities, intercity bus facilities, multimodal and intermodal facilities, nonmotorized transportation facilities (e.g., pedestrian walkways and bicycle facilities), and intermodal connectors) **that should function as an integrated metropolitan transportation system**, giving emphasis to those facilities that serve important national and regional transportation functions over the period of the transportation plan.” [\(Return\)](#)

17. [AS 19.20.080](#). A municipality of over 5,000 population, according to the latest available census, together with the department, shall develop and adopt a master highway plan, which **shall insure the proper location and integration of the Alaska highway connections in the municipality**. In selecting and designating the master highway plan, they shall take into account the important principal streets that connect residential areas with business areas and the streets that carry important rural traffic into and across the municipality, in order to ensure a system of highways upon which traffic can be controlled and protected in a manner to provide safe and efficient movement of traffic in the municipality. [\(Return\)](#)

[\(Back to first page\)](#)



February 25, 2025

Sean Holland, P.E.
Chair, AMATS Policy Committee
4111 Aviation Drive
Anchorage, AK 99519

Delivered via e-mail.

Subject: Response to January 22, 2025, Letter Regarding Anchorage Municipal Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS) Boundary and Operating Agreement Revision

Dear Chair Holland,

On January 22, 2025 Executive Director Jongenelen requested written explanations and clarifications from the Governor and myself regarding the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) and the Department of Law's concerns about the AMATS Operating Agreement and boundary changes. We hope the following explanations and clarification satisfy the request of the Policy Committee.

Legal Authorities Governing National Highway System Facilities in the MPA

The attached summary of legal authorities governing National Highway System (NHS) facilities within the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) includes controlling state and federal requirements. This document is intended to serve as a readily accessible reference for discussions among the Policy Committee, Technical Committee, and the public. The index is expandable, so please advise if additional topics related to Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)-State coordination should be included.

The legal authorities governing the inclusion of NHS projects in planning documents, as well as the selection or rejection of NHS projects within the MPA, are the primary focus of this summary. From the State's perspective, a key source of friction and delay in the planning process is AMATS's assertion of authority to select NHS projects for inclusion in or exclusion from planning documents. This assertion of authority over the selection of the State's NHS projects was in clearest display on November 21, 2024 when the AMATS Policy Committee voted to remove the Safer Seward Highway Project from AMATS's MTP, for the expressly stated purpose of removing the project from the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in Amendment 2. As explained in detail below, the selection of the State's NHS projects for inclusion in the TIP and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is a State authority and not an MPO authority.

The State's NHS projects are per se regionally significant by definition in federal regulations, as the State's NHS projects serve regional transportation needs such as access to and from the area outside the region. 23 CFR 450.104. Regionally significant projects *shall* be incorporated into the MPO's TIP and STIP in accordance with governing federal regulations. 23 CFR 450.326(f) and 23 CFR 450.218(h), respectively. Thus, the AMATS Policy Committee November 21, 2024 vote to remove the State's regionally significant NHS project was contrary to the duties imposed on that committee by federal regulations.

While both the State and the MPO have a duty to cooperate in the development of the TIP and STIP, federal law mandates that this cooperation be directed toward ensuring the inclusion of the State's selected NHS projects in these planning documents, rather than their exclusion. For your situational awareness, federal regulations do not limit the definition of "regionally significant" projects to NHS facilities. As such, MPO projects such as principal arterial highways may also benefit from this classification.

Transportation Management Area (TMA) MPOs, such as AMATS, may select any federally funded project within the MPA *except* projects on the NHS. 23 USC 134(k)(5)(A). NHS projects within the MPA shall be selected for implementation by the State from the approved TIP. 23 USC 134(k)(5)(A). The State and AMATS each have a duty to cooperate in the development of the TIP through a continuing and comprehensive planning process. 23 USC 134(k)(2). The MPO's selection of all projects excluding NHS projects is done in cooperation with the State and, conversely, the State's selection of NHS projects within the MPA is done in cooperation with the MPO. Contrary to statements previously made by AMATS staff, the MPO does not have the authority to select or "deselect" NHS projects from the TIP.

Operating Agreement Updates

AMATS's assertion of authority to include or exclude from the TIP NHS projects located within the MPA has disrupted what was previously a cooperative highway planning process and is impeding the State's project delivery. To restore clarity regarding decision-making authority over NHS routes within the MPA, the State requires an update to the operating agreement to clarify and come to a common understanding of legal authorities and procedures for coordinated development of planning documents. Federal regulations mandate such an update when there is a substantial change in decision-making authority or responsibility. 23 CFR 450.310(j)(2). The State considers AMATS's continuing assertion of authority over NHS routes within the MPA to constitute a "substantial change," necessitating a process to establish and document the procedures governing these newly claimed authorities.

State and federal laws allow the Municipality of Anchorage to assume all or part of the authorities and responsibilities for the NHS routes located within the MPA. The attached index of authorities provides references to the laws and legal standards for the Municipality to assume responsibility for portions of the NHS or specific components of project development, delivery, or maintenance. DOT&PF can collaborate with the MPO and the Municipality to transfer such authorities and obligations or to relinquish, modify, or review NHS routes within the MPA. However, any such changes must be mutually agreed upon and formally documented to delineate responsibilities for specific transportation facilities and the corresponding planning processes.

Given recent challenges in project selection and planning, the Policy Committee may benefit from exploring ways to enhance regulatory clarity, project efficiency, and technical support. Federal law provides flexibility in structuring State-MPO coordination, allowing opportunities to refine processes for better alignment with state and federal requirements while maintaining regional transportation priorities. Clearly defining DOT&PF's role in technical planning and programming could improve coordination and long-term planning outcomes. If the Policy Committee sees value in strengthening technical partnerships, DOT&PF remains committed to offering expertise and support in a way that serves regional needs while respecting the Committee's autonomy.

Concerns Regarding AMATS's Boundary Expansion Proposal

Your January 22, 2025, letter specifically requested clarification on why AMATS's boundary expansion is linked to DOT&PF's request to revisit the operating agreement. The primary reason is that AMATS's proposed expansion includes areas that do not meet federal criteria for MPA expansion.

AMATS's proposal seeks to expand the boundary southward to include an additional mile of the Seward Highway and approximately 1.5 square miles of Chugach State Park. However, 23 CFR 450.312(a)(1) authorizes MPA expansion beyond the existing urbanized area in those areas "expected to become urbanized within a 20-year forecast period." Neither the Seward Highway nor Chugach State Park can reasonably be expected to urbanize within any forecast period. Similarly, AMATS's proposal includes adding 6.25 miles of the Glenn Highway, including the entire Eagle River Loop Road interchange—areas that also do not meet federal urbanization criteria. These segments of the highway system are NHS properties, exclusively managed and operated by DOT&PF.

Since the need to update the operating agreement arises from AMATS's assertion of decision-making authority over NHS facilities, DOT&PF cannot make a recommendation to the Governor on AMATS's proposed boundary expansion until there is a clear, shared understanding of jurisdiction over these facilities.

We also observed that many other areas in AMATS's boundary expansion proposal share common characteristics:

- They are located outside the designated urban area (with a few small exceptions).
- They include properties that cannot be urbanized in the future.
- They are managed and operated by non-municipal agencies (except for the Port of Alaska properties).

The largest portion of the expansion proposal covers Chugach State Park, followed by additional expansions over DOT&PF's NHS properties. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and its Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation reported no prior knowledge of AMATS's expansion proposal. This is concerning, as the expansion would impact all access routes to Chugach State Park from the Anchorage Bowl.

Before DOT&PF can make a recommendation on AMATS's proposal, we require additional information on:

1. AMATS's coordination efforts with DNR.

2. Whether AMATS plans to include DNR representation on its committees (23 CFR 450.310(d)(1)(iii)).
3. DNR's stance on the proposed expansion.

Similarly, the proposal does not clarify coordination efforts with the Alaska Railroad Corporation and the Port of Alaska regarding the inclusion of their facilities in the MPA expansion. Further details on these discussions are also necessary before proceeding.

As part of this review, we also developed a GIS dataset documenting the AMATS boundary as it existed in 2010, the 2014 update, and the proposed 2024 boundary expansion. However, we found no documentation confirming the Governor's approval of the 2014 update. Therefore, we assume the current request for approval will also encompass the 2014 update to ensure compliance with federal and state laws and regulations.

The GIS boundary datasets are available at the following link:

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/0cfd6c2623b0426cbe83f9c48a020335/>

Next Steps

To move forward, we recommend a joint effort between AMATS and DOT&PF to:

1. Update the Operating Agreement to clarify legal authorities and ensure compliance.
2. Reevaluate AMATS's proposed boundary expansion in coordination with relevant agencies and with consideration of appropriate authorities.

As the Chair of the AMATS Policy Committee, I'm asking you to lead this effort and prioritize its timely completion. As we work towards the December 29, 2026 MPA expansion deadline, we look forward to continued collaboration to improve communication and coordination in this critical transportation planning process.

Sincerely,



Ryan Anderson, P.E.

Attachments: As Stated

CC Aaron Jongenelen, Executive Director, AMATS
James Starzek, AMATS Transportation Planner / Coordinator
Graham Downey, Policy Committee Member
Jason Olds, Policy Committee Member
Mark Littlefield, Policy Committee Member
Daniel Volland, Policy Committee Member
Meg Zaletel, Policy Committee Member

INDEX OF AUTHORITIES REGARDING NHS FACILITIES WITHIN MPAs

Under State law, the State of Alaska is mandated to maintain full responsibility and authority over the State highway system. The State of Alaska, through DOT&PF, is similarly obligated to plan, construct, and maintain the network of highways linking the cities and communities in the various regions of the State. The highway system linking the various regions of State of Alaska has been designated as part of the National Highway System.

1. State must construct and maintain state highway system – [AS 19.10.030](#)
2. DOT&PF obligated to plan construct and maintain the regional NHS – [AS 19.05.125](#)
3. Alaska’s regional routes have been designated part of NHS – [23 USC 103\(b\)](#) and [Maps](#)

State and Federal laws and regulations mandate a collaborative approach to transportation planning within metropolitan areas. However, these laws and regulations do not grant a Metropolitan Planning Organization power or authority to veto or “de-select” the State’s selected NHS projects that are located within a municipal planning area; nor do these laws and regulations grant the State the power to veto or “de-select” the MPO’s non-NHS projects located within the municipal planning area.

4. MPO selects non-NHS projects in the MPA – [23 USC 134\(k\)\(5\)\(A\)](#)
5. State selects NHS projects in the MPA – [23 USC 134\(k\)\(5\)\(B\)](#)
6. TIP shall contain “All regionally significant projects” – [23 CFR 450.326\(f\)](#)
7. STIP shall contain “All regionally significant projects” – [23 CFR 450.218\(h\)](#)
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Re-designation of a MPO, including updates to its operating agreement, is required when there is a substantial change in decision-making authority or responsibility. The MPO’s assertion of selection or “de-selection” authority over NHS projects located in the MPA is a substantial change in decision-making authority. The extent of the MPO’s new change in decision-making authority or responsibility over NHS projects or routes, and the procedures to implement any new authority and responsibility must be documented in writing.

9. Operating agreement must be amended with substantial change in decision-making authority – [23 CFR 450.310\(j\)](#)
10. Periodic review of operating agreement required – [23 CFR 450.314\(b\)](#)
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13. State can delegate NHS planning authority to municipality— [AS 19.15.030](#).
14. State can propose any modification to the NHS, in cooperation with local and regional officials. [23 USC 103\(b\)\(3\)](#).

The MPO’s metropolitan transportation plan, from which it selects its projects for inclusion into the TIP, is required to include “major roadways” and smaller transportation facilities to function as an integrated metropolitan transportation system. State and Federal laws and regulations do not contemplate NHS projects, and similar corridor projects that connect rural and urban areas, as the type of transportation facilities for which the MPOs have primary decision making responsibilities.

15. MPO’s MTP identifies facilities that function as an integrated metro system that serves regional transportation functions. [23 USC 134\(j\)\(2\)\(A\)](#):
16. MPO’s MTP shall include facilities that function as an integrated metro system that serves regional transportation functions. [23 CFR 450.324\(f\)](#):
17. Municipality shall ensure proper integration of State highway connections in municipal highway plan — [AS 19.20.080](#)

1. [AS 19.10.030](#). The department is responsible for the construction and maintenance of the state highway system. [\(Return\)](#)
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2. [AS 19.05.125](#). The purpose of AS 19.05 - AS 19.25 is to establish a highway **department capable of carrying out a highway planning, construction, and maintenance program that will provide** a common defense to the United States and the state, **a network of highways linking together cities and communities throughout the state** (thereby contributing to the development of commerce and industry in the state, and aiding the extraction and utilization of its resources), and otherwise improve the economic and general welfare of the people of the state. [\(Return\)](#)
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3. [23 USC 103\(b\)](#) National Highway System.-(1) Description.-The National Highway System consists of the highway routes and connections to transportation facilities that shall-(A) serve major population centers, international border crossings, ports, airports, public transportation facilities, and other intermodal transportation facilities and other major travel destinations; (B) meet national defense requirements; and (C) serve interstate and interregional travel and commerce. [\(Return\)](#)
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4. [23 USC 134\(k\)\(5\)](#) "Selection of Projects. (A) In general.-**All Federally funded projects** carried out within the boundaries of a metropolitan planning area serving a transportation management area under this title (**excluding projects carried out on the National Highway System**) or under chapter 53 of title 49 **shall be selected for implementation from the approved TIP by the metropolitan planning organization** designated for the area in consultation with the State and any affected public transportation operator." [\(Return\)](#)
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5. [23 USC 134\(k\)\(5\)\(B\)](#): "**National Highway System projects**.-Projects carried out within the boundaries of a metropolitan planning area serving a transportation management area on the National Highway System **shall be selected for implementation from the approved TIP by the State** in cooperation with the metropolitan planning organization designated for the area." [\(Return\)](#)
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6. [23 CFR 450.326\(f\)](#) "**The TIP shall contain all regionally significant projects** requiring an action by the FHWA or the FTA whether or not the projects are to be funded under title 23 U.S.C. Chapters 1 and 2 or title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 (e.g., addition of an interchange to the Interstate System with State, local, and/or private funds and congressionally designated projects not funded under 23 U.S.C. or 49 U.S.C. Chapter

53). For public information and conformity purposes, the TIP shall include all regionally significant projects proposed to be funded with Federal funds other than those administered by the FHWA or the FTA, as well as all regionally significant projects to be funded with non- Federal funds.” [\(Return\)](#)

7. [23 CFR 450.218\(h\)](#): “**The STIP shall contain all regionally significant projects** requiring an action by the FHWA or the FTA whether or not the projects are to be funded with 23 U.S.C. Chapters 1 and 2 or title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 funds (e.g., addition of an interchange to the Interstate System with State, local, and/or private funds, and congressionally designated projects not funded under title 23 U.S.C. or title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53). For informational and conformity purposes, the STIP shall include (if appropriate and included in any TIPs) all regionally significant projects proposed to be funded with Federal funds other than those administered by the FHWA or the FTA, as well as all regionally significant projects to be funded with non-Federal funds.” [\(Return\)](#)
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8. [23 CFR 450.104](#): “**Regionally significant project means a transportation project** (other than projects that may be grouped in the TIP and/or STIP or exempt projects as defined in EPA's transportation conformity regulations ([40 CFR part 93, subpart A](#))) **that is on a facility that serves regional transportation needs** (such as access to and from the area outside the region; major activity centers in the region; major planned developments such as new retail malls, sports complexes, or employment centers; or transportation terminals) and would normally be included in the modeling of the metropolitan area's transportation network. At a minimum, this includes all principal arterial highways and all fixed guideway transit facilities that offer an alternative to regional highway travel.” [\(Return\)](#)
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9. [23 CFR 450.310\(j\)](#): “**Redesignation of an MPO** (in accordance with the provisions of this section) **is required** whenever the existing MPO proposes to make: ... (2) A substantial change in the decisionmaking authority or responsibility of the MPO, or in decisionmaking procedures established under MPO by-laws.” [\(Return\)](#)
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10. [23 CFR 450.314\(b\)](#): “The MPO, the State(s), and the providers of public transportation should periodically review and update the agreement, as appropriate, to reflect effective changes.” [\(Return\)](#)
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11. [23 CFR 450.314\(a\)](#). The MPO, the State(s), and the providers of public transportation **shall cooperatively determine their mutual responsibilities** in carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process. These responsibilities shall be **clearly identified in written agreements** among the MPO, the State(s), and the providers of public transportation serving the MPA. [...] [\(Return\)](#)

12. [AS 19.20.015](#). Local control of state transportation corridors. **(a) A municipality, by resolution of its governing body, may request of the department the assumption of the department's responsibilities relating to planning of transportation corridors that are to be located within the boundaries or operating area of the municipality.** ... The parties may by mutual agreement provide for joint or cooperative assumption of responsibilities by the department and the municipality. [\(Return\)](#)

13. [AS 19.15.030](#). Participation by municipality in federal highway construction. When a federal-aid highway is routed through a municipality, it may participate in the financing, planning, construction, acquisition of right-of-way, and maintenance of the highway **in the manner and proportion the department determines is reasonable and proper.** [\(Return\)](#)

14. [23 USC 103\(b\)\(3\)](#). Modifications to NHS.—(A)In general.—The Secretary may make any modification to the National Highway System, including any modification consisting of a connector to a major intermodal terminal or the withdrawal of a road from that system, that is proposed by a State if the Secretary determines that the modification—

- (i) meets the criteria established for the National Highway System under this title after the date of enactment of the MAP–21; and
- (ii) (I) enhances the national transportation characteristics of the National Highway System; or
- (II) in the case of the withdrawal of a road, is reasonable and appropriate.

(B) Cooperation.—(i) In general.— In proposing a modification under this paragraph, a State shall cooperate with local and regional officials. (ii) Urbanized areas.— In an urbanized area, the local officials shall act through the metropolitan planning organization designated for the area under section 134. [\(Return\)](#)

15. [23 USC 134\(j\)\(2\)\(A\)](#) “Identification of transportation facilities [for the MTP].- (i) In general.-An identification of **transportation facilities** (including major roadways, public transportation facilities, intercity bus facilities, multimodal and intermodal facilities, nonmotorized transportation facilities, and intermodal connectors) **that should function as an integrated metropolitan transportation system**, giving emphasis to those facilities that serve important national and regional transportation functions.” [\(Return\)](#)

16. [23 CFR 450.324\(f\)](#): “**The metropolitan transportation plan shall, at a minimum, include: ... (2) Existing and proposed transportation facilities** (including major roadways, public transportation facilities, intercity bus facilities, multimodal and intermodal facilities, nonmotorized transportation facilities (e.g., pedestrian walkways and bicycle facilities), and intermodal connectors) **that should function as an integrated metropolitan transportation system**, giving emphasis to those facilities that serve important national and regional transportation functions over the period of the transportation plan.” [\(Return\)](#)
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17. [AS 19.20.080](#). A municipality of over 5,000 population, according to the latest available census, together with the department, shall develop and adopt a master highway plan, which **shall insure the proper location and integration of the Alaska highway connections in the municipality**. In selecting and designating the master highway plan, they shall take into account the important principal streets that connect residential areas with business areas and the streets that carry important rural traffic into and across the municipality, in order to ensure a system of highways upon which traffic can be controlled and protected in a manner to provide safe and efficient movement of traffic in the municipality. [\(Return\)](#)

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