

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

January 22, 2026

1:01 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Ashley Carrick, Co-Chair
Representative Ted Eischeid, Co-Chair
Representative Genevieve Mina
Representative Louise Stutes
Representative Kevin McCabe
Representative Steve St. Clair
Representative Garret Nelson

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

PRESENTATION(S) : PEDESTRIAN FATALITIES AND SAFETY

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

SHANNON MCCARTHY, Communications Director
Office of the Commissioner
Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-offered a presentation, titled
"Pedestrian Fatalities and Safety."

PAM GOLDEN, Statewide Traffic Engineer
Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-offered a presentation, titled
"Pedestrian Fatalities and Safety."

ALEX READ, Group Chief
Central Region Design
Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-offered a presentation, titled "Pedestrian Fatalities and Safety."

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:01:53 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR ASHLEY CARRICK called the House Transportation Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. Representatives St. Clair, Nelson, Stutes, Mina, McCabe, Eischeid, and Carrick were present at the call to order.

PRESENTATION(S): Pedestrian Fatalities and Safety

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CO-CHAIR CARRICK announced that the only order of business would be the Pedestrian Fatalities and Safety presentation.

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SHANNON MCCARTHY, Communications Director, Office of the Commissioner, Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF), co-offered a presentation, titled "Pedestrian Fatalities and Safety," via PowerPoint [hard copy in the committee file]. She began the presentation on slide 2, which described the updated 2026 Highway Safety Improvement Plan (HSIP). She said that DOT&PF coordinated with the Municipality of Anchorage in updating the 2026 HSIP and will be employing Advance Construct (AC) to capture fiscal year 2026 (FY 26) funding. She noted that the updated 2026 Anchorage funding is \$30 million.

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MS. MCCARTHY, in response to questions from Representative St. Clair, stated that the \$30 million is U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funding through the highway safety improvement program and that DOT&PF would be using AC, which would tap into FY 27.

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MS. MCCARTHY, in response to questions from Representative Mina, stated that DOT&PF coordinated with the Municipality of Anchorage through the Zero Vision Task Force. The department's

members met with the mayor and her staff to improve the program and its efficiency. She said that the lane drop traffic analysis is coming quickly, and the lane drop project on A Street will be moving forward using AC.

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MS. MCCARTHY, in response to questions from Representative Eischeid, confirmed that AC stands for Advance Construct and that it is a financial tool that can be used in different phases of a project, including the design phase. She compared AC to using a credit card with a payment plan. She added that using federal dollars for a project implies a commitment to following through with that project. She said that cancelling a project would require significant agreement across DOT&PF and with FHWA.

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PAM GOLDEN, Statewide Traffic Engineer, Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, picked up the presentation on slide 3, which distinguished road diets from lane drops. She stated that Anchorage has many one-way streets and that there is no proven countermeasure to take away a lane on a one-way road. She said the Vision Zero Task Force decided that a systemwide analysis is necessary, to create safe and efficient network for all users. She highlighted some factors to be considered in this analysis, including the impacts to emergency response and freight.

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MS. GOLDEN, in response to questions from Representative Mina, clarified that a road diet occurs takes away one lane on a two-way road with at least four lanes. She highlighted that road diets reduce turning crashes. Ms. Golden said that there is not enough national data to prove that lane drops are safe and effective.

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MS. GOLDEN, in response to Representative McCabe, defined his example as a reversible lane. She said that while there are 14 projects underway, more are being proposed, emphasizing the Vision Zero Task Force's need for a systemwide analysis. Ms. Golden said pedestrian fencing on 5th Avenue in Anchorage is one project being considered.

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MS. GOLDEN, in response to Representative Stutes, clarified that a lane drop refers to a two-way road, while a road diet refers to a one-way road.

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MS. GOLDEN, in response to a series of questions from Co-Chair Carrick, stated that DOT&PF is waiting for the analysis to be complete before moving forward with the road diet project on Northern Lights Boulevard. She said that the project has been moved to FY 27 but not cancelled. She said that she is familiar with delivery schedules on only a few projects currently.

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MS. MCCARTHY, in response to Co-Chair Carrick, added that the intent of slide 3 was to demonstrate the road diet and lane drop projects that have been proposed in the last 12 to 18 months.

MS. GOLDEN said that the HSIP funding plan is available on DOT&PF's website.

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MS. GOLDEN, in response to a series of questions from Representative Eischeid, stated that DOT&PF is waiting for a traffic analysis of Ingra Street and Gambell Street. She said that she does not have the timeframe on the systemwide analysis yet and that she needs that system analysis to know how many projects DOT&PF will be moving forward with in Anchorage. She stated that it will be five to seven years before a proven safety countermeasure can be confirmed. She noted that neither increased nor decreased speed necessarily increases pedestrian safety. She emphasized that there are many factors regarding increasing pedestrian safety, including number of driveways, origins and destinations of drivers, pedestrians, and bikers.

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MS. MCCARTHY, in response to a series of questions from Representative Mina, stated that HSIP is a very different kind of program, as it is data-driven and offers fewer opportunities for the public to weigh in. She said that DOT&PF does plan to present the project to the public and to ask for feedback.

REPRESENTATIVE MINA asked about studying the impact of road diets that occur in the winter when a lane is lost due to snow being plowed to the sides of the road.

MS. GOLDEN responded that that is a complicated scenario. She explained that there are variations in seasonal traffic. She emphasized that she does not know the timeline of the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Traffic Solutions (AMATS) project analysis.

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MS. GOLDEN moved to slide 4, which provided the updated 2026 HSIP spending plan, including projects on Tudor Road and the intersection of Ingra Street and Gambell Street. She moved to slide 5 and provided a brief recap of the Highway Safety Improvement Program, which is a federally mandated program including 29 different kinds of projects. She said HSIP is the only program that requires a cost-benefit analysis. She added that HSIP accounts for only 5-6 percent of total federal aid spending.

MS. GOLDEN moved to slide 6, which listed pedestrian and bicyclist proven safety countermeasures. She also described the process of determining the best countermeasure for a situation. She moved to slide 7, which showed the process of moving from a concept to a project and explained her role in the project planning process. She continued to slide 8 and described the process of project development and delivery.

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MS. MCCARTHY continued to slide 9, stating that HSIP projects can be the department's most controversial, particularly because they can change the way a person uses infrastructure. She added that often HSIP projects are presented to the public after a solution has been identified.

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MS. MCCARTHY, in response to Co-Chair Carrick, described the different pedestrian safety fencing used in both Fairbanks and Anchorage, explaining that it can come in different forms, but must be crash-worthy. She highlighted that there are limited options for aesthetics.

CO-CHAIR CARRICK expressed concern with the disregard for safety barriers and asked if there has been support for those projects in Anchorage.

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ALEX READ, Group Chief, Central Region Design, Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, responded that studies have shown an 86 percent reduction of crashes with pedestrians involving mid-block crossings. He agreed that there has been mixed input from the community. He added that pedestrian fencing is a proven safety measure but limits pedestrians' ability to cross where they want. He included that DOT&PF has received dissatisfied feedback with the fencing aesthetics in Anchorage.

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CO-CHAIR EISCHEID reinforced that the Minnesota Drive pedestrian fence was not fully supported by the public. He emphasized how important the public process is before completing a project. He also expressed concern regarding jaywalking in Anchorage.

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REPRESENTATIVE MINA asked if the three-year cost-benefit analyses of HSIPs are available.

MS. GOLDEN responded that all reports are public. She said that specific project reports may not be published but can be provided. She added that DOT&PF's last year of finished crash data is from 2024. While DOT&PF has more data, any data from after 2024 is not certified yet.

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REPRESENTATIVE NELSON asked if there is an average of dollars spent versus lives saved by DOT&PF.

MS. GOLDEN responded that DOT&PF has a minimum predicted cost ratio for ranked projects, which can become very technical. She said that a more expensive project should have a higher predicted cost ratio.

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MS. GOLDEN, in response to a question from Representative McCabe, explained that there are national studies that consider reducing access points to a driveway. She said that different countermeasures have different effects on different types of crashes.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE said that a lot of this is education. He shared his experience with a change in infrastructure in his district. He described the dissatisfaction that some business owners had with the change.

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CO-CHAIR EISCHEID highlighted the tragic death of 30 pedestrians in Anchorage over the last 2 years. He said that the statistical value of a person is a cold calculation and asked what that calculation is.

MS. GOLDEN replied that she does not currently know the calculated cost of a human fatality. She estimated between \$10 million and \$20 million, but that value may be lower in HSIP calculations.

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MR. READ continued the PowerPoint on slide 14, which showed the current configuration and proposed changes for the intersection of Ingra Street and Gambell Street. He described the improvements that will be made, including new street lighting configurations and relocating utilities underground.

MR. READ continued to slide 11, which demonstrated proposed pedestrian safety improvements on 5th Avenue between Concrete Street and Karluk Street.

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CO-CHAIR CARRICK asked how long the Minnesota Drive pedestrian barriers have existed.

MR. READ responded that the Minnesota pedestrian barriers were constructed in 2024, so there is not enough data yet from the project. In response to another question from Co-Chair Carrick, Mr. Read stated that only increased lighting and a safety fence are being considered so far to increase pedestrian safety.

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REPRESENTATIVE MINA asked how this barrier is being prioritized.

MS. GOLDEN responded that this project was nominated a few years ago. She said that sometimes blocking access can be the quickest safety solution, adding that this could potentially be an interim solution.

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MS. MCCARTHY moved to slide 12, which highlighted safety measures taken in the Kodiak area. She also highlighted the Smart Pedestrian Lighting Pilot, which she is excited to install and study.

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REPRESENTATIVE STUTES expressed hope that DOT&PF will educate the people in Kodiak that this lighting system will be installed.

MS. MCCARTHY agreed that informing the public is important. She said DOT&PF will be sending a public information officer to the installation to create materials to educate the public.

MS. MCCARTHY continued slide 12, highlighting the installations of guardrails, which are mitigation features, but not safety features.

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REPRESENTATIVE STUTES said that this is good news. She expressed hope that recalled guardrails in Kodiak will be replaced soon.

MS. MCCARTHY responded that guardrails are a very complicated subject. She said that old guardrails were not recalled but new standards were passed, allowing old guardrails to remain in place until new guardrails are available.

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MS. MCCARTHY moved to slide 13, which highlighted the intersection of Parks Highway and Sheep Creek Road in Fairbanks.

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CO-CHAIR CARRICK asked about westbound sidewalk traffic and if there is any plan for a bike path.

MS. GOLDEN responded that DOT&PF is looking for funding for a bike path.

CO-CHAIR CARRICK explained the standard practice for drivers in this intersection. She asked how far the demonstrated barrier between lanes would extend.

MS. GOLDEN responded that the barrier would be about as long as the solid white line that currently separates lanes. She added that, due to the speed of the highway, the barrier must be traversable. Ms. Golden added that DOT&PF plans to install a similar safety feature at the intersection of Egan Drive and Vanderbilt Hill Road in Juneau.

CO-CHAIR CARRICK expressed excitement for this project and her hope to better understand it.

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MR. READ moved to slide 14, which highlighted safety projects in the Matanuska-Susitna (Mat-Su) Borough. He explained the safety advantages of roundabouts and their drawbacks. He described each of the six projects planned in this area, including estimated start dates and specific safety features.

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REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE described his pet peeve intersection in the Mat-Su Borough. He suggested building an official turn lane and asked about funding.

MS. GOLDEN responded that Section 130 funds are less than \$2 million per year. She expressed interest in initiating a conversation with the Alaska Railroad Corporation.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE emphasized the need to better protect cars turning at that intersection.

MR. READ responded that improvements to that intersection are already included in the Main Street project.

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REPRESENTATIVE NELSON asked if a specific construction in Palmer falls under this same program.

MR. READ confirmed that that is an HSIP project.

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MS. MCCARTHY moved to slide 15, which listed safety spotlights across Alaska. She elaborated on many of the listed successes, which included distributing reflective gear, conducting vulnerable road users (VRU) safety audits, and seat belt outreach campaigns.

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REPRESENTATIVE STUTES asked about installing cameras at intersections. She said that she has seen many people run yellow and red lights in Anchorage.

MS. GOLDEN said that there are a couple projects in Anchorage to address this issue, including camera projects and a red-light indicator program. She added that now one officer can confirm that a light was red.

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REPRESENTATIVE MINA asked about the C Street and Benson Boulevard intersection.

MS. GOLDEN described the issue at the intersection, explaining that pedestrians have a green light at the same time as cars have a left turn light. She said that DOT&PF plans to use rapid response funds to eliminate this light overlap.

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CO-CHAIR EISCHEID said he believes in the public process. He asserted that slower speeds do result in decreased property damage and other types of damage.

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REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE said he has been waiting for months for a study on the effectiveness of speed reductions. He added that constituents have requested lowering speed limits in more dangerous areas.

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MS. MCCARTHY moved to slide 16, which showed the top five areas for fatal and serious injury (F+SI) from crashes. She highlighted that Anchorage Municipality is overrepresented in its percentage of Alaska's total VRU F+SI crashes between 2020 and 2024. She also highlighted that the Kenai Peninsula Borough has only 8 percent of Alaska's population but 15 percent of Alaska's total F+SI crashes from 2020-2024.

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MS. MCCARTHY moved to slide 17, on which she highlighted that the state had gone 61 days, between November 22, 2025, to January 21, 2026, with zero pedestrian fatalities. She also noted that there were zero vehicle fatalities between December 24, 2025, and January 21, 2026. She emphasized that zero fatalities are possible.

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REPRESENTATIVE MINA noted that there was a bicycle fatality in Anchorage last summer.

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REPRESENTATIVE NELSON asked about the main goal for increasing pedestrian safety.

MS. GOLDEN responded that there are two ways to increase pedestrian safety: crossing distance and what is done with the reallocated space.

MR. READ added that decreasing speed is another factor.

REPRESENTATIVE NELSON asked how often people get hit as they start versus finish crossing a street.

MS. GOLDEN responded that crash narratives are "all over the place."

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CO-CHAIR EISCHEID addressed the biker fatality in Anchorage last summer and clarified the details of the situation. He elaborated on Representative Stute's earlier comment on the high frequency of red lights run in Anchorage. He described his

experience touring the Anchorage Police Department's real time crime center in December.

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MS. GOLDEN, in response to questions from Co-Chair Carrick, stated that Anchorage funding was anticipated to be between \$9 million and \$10 million. She said that this would include AC funding.

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REPRESENTATIVE MINA said she is primarily a pedestrian and shared her experience of being uncomfortable as a pedestrian in Anchorage. She requested data on pedestrian barriers' ability to reduce crashes. She expressed concern regarding community backlash on the Minnesota pedestrian barriers.

MS. MCCARTHY agreed and stated that HSIP does not have the same level of public engagement as other projects. She said she plans to increase public engagement whenever possible for HSIPs.

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CO-CHAIR CARRICK acknowledged Lauren Little from DOT&PF had been available for questions online the entire meeting.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Transportation Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 2:47 p.m.