

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE

February 27, 2025

1:37 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Chair
Senator Löki Tobin, Vice Chair
Senator Mike Shower

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Jesse Kiehl
Senator Bert Stedman

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

PRESENTATION(S) : METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS OVERVIEW

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

KIM SOLLIEN, Executive Director
Matanuska Valley Planning for Transportation (MVP)
Palmer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-presented Metropolitan Planning
Organizations Overview.

JACKSON C. FOX, Executive Director
Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-presented Metropolitan Planning
Organizations Overview.

AARON JONGENELEN, Executive Director
Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-presented Metropolitan Planning
Organizations Overview.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:37:33 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN called the Senate Transportation Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:37 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Tobin, Shower, and Chair Bjorkman.

PRESENTATION(S) : METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS OVERVIEW

[1:38:16 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN announced the presentation Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) Overview. He said each presenter would give an overview of their individual MPO and provide information on MPOs in general.

[1:39:33 PM](#)

KIM SOLLIEN, Executive Director, Matanuska Valley Planning for Transportation (MVP), Palmer, Alaska, advanced to slide 2 and gave an overview of the origins of metropolitan planning organizations (MPO):

[Original punctuation provided.]

ORIGINS OF METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) were birthed out of the 1950s Eisenhower Interstate System development.

Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, authorized the largest public works program in U.S. history aimed at the construction of 41,000 miles of interstate highway system.

With little coordination with the cities, towns, or counties with federal grants in hand, State DOTs imposed the construction of the new highway segments on local communities. In many cases, the poorest neighborhoods were razed or segmented.

By the late 1950s and early 1960s, lawsuits seeking to block construction of portions of the interstate highway system began to appear. The Federal Government concluded that a better, more cooperative process was needed.

[1:42:11 PM](#)

MS. SOLLIEN advanced to slide 3 and continued her overview of the history of MPOs:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962, signed by President Kennedy, required urban areas of more than 50,000 residents to carry out a **continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive (3-C) transportation planning process** between states and local communities as a condition of federal assistance.

This legislation led to the MPO's of today. The greatest decade 1956-1966 - Interstate system - Highway History - Federal Highway Administration

Today there are 459 MPOs across the country.

[1:43:43 PM](#)

MS. SOLLIEN advanced to slide 4 and discussed the various MVP plans. She offered brief descriptions of each:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Title 23 US Code sec 132 established the national policy that the MPO carry out the comprehensive, cooperative, and continuous transportation planning process

The work of an MPO is Planning

- Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) 20 + year long-range plan (transit, bike and ped, cars, freight)
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) 4-year short-range project funding plan
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) 2-year staff work plan
- Public Participation Plan (PPP) Title VI Plan

[1:45:44 PM](#)

SENATOR TOBIN asked how MPO work is integrated with state transportation planning and public engagement - and who is involved with these processes.

[1:46:31 PM](#)

MS. SOLLIEN shared her understanding that MPO is responsible for planning within its boundary. The MVP board represents different constituencies and ensures that their various priority projects are considered during the planning process. These projects become part of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and are then integrated into TIP. She explained that the state and MPO are equally involved in planning and determining priority projects. She added that the Borough represents a larger area than MVP's metropolitan transportation area boundary and any additional planning will be coordinated across boundaries. She said that, in theory, all regional projects will show up on MVP's plan within its MPO boundary.

[1:48:24 PM](#)

SENATOR TOBIN commented that the MVP board has robust representation and surmised that each member receives one vote. She asked for additional information regarding the planning process and how decisions are made.

[1:48:58 PM](#)

MS. SOLLIEN explained that the policy board is made up of 7 members and listed these. She noted that the Borough holds two seats on the policy board because the majority of roads in the metropolitan planning area are within the Borough. She explained the process used to determine infrastructure needs. This includes input from each body represented by the policy board members along with community input. Decisions are made by member consensus.

[1:51:13 PM](#)

MS. SOLLIEN advanced to Slide 5:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Wasilla, Knik Fairview, North Lakes Urban Area Designation

On December 29, 2022 the U.S. Census identified a portion of the MatSu Borough Core Area as a Qualifying Urban Area, with a population of over 50,000.

MS. SOLLIEN noted that MVP is the newest MPO in Alaska. She gave a brief overview of MVP history.

[1:52:16 PM](#)

MS. SOLLIEN advanced to Slide 6, which contains population data for the Wasilla-Knik-Fairview-North Lakes Urban Area. In 2023,

the census data recorded a population of 57,102. She briefly discussed the data and how the census calculates this information to determine that an urban area designation is appropriate.

[1:52:55 PM](#)

MS. SOLLIEN advanced to Slide 7 and explained the federal regulation requirements for urban areas:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Once the census designates an urban area, within one year of the designation, an official metropolitan planning organization (MPO) must be established to continue to receive federal highway funding.

MVP for Transportation's Operating Agreement and Official Formation Occurred on December 19, 2023

[1:54:25 PM](#)

MS. SOLLIEN advanced to Slide 8, which lists the seven members of the MVP policy board. She noted that each regional government is represented and reiterated that the MatSu Borough has two representatives. She said there is also a 16-member technical committee with representatives from each regional government (e.g. planning and/or public work directors and various non-profit advocates). She stated that the work of MPO is planning and the technical committee does a great deal of this work; the policy board gives final approval to plans created by the technical committee. She shared that MVP is autonomous and provided the reasoning for this.

[1:56:13 PM](#)

MS. SOLLIEN advanced to Slide 9 and discussed MPO funding:

[Original punctuation provided.]

MPO Funding

Metropolitan Planning Funds (PL funds) are provided from the Federal Highway Trust Fund and distributed by State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to conduct the planning activities required by Title 23 of the U.S. Code 134.

Each MPO is responsible for planning to meet the transportation needs within its metropolitan planning area.

[1:57:00 PM](#)

MS. SOLLIEN advanced to Slide 10 and discussed the planning area boundary. She explained that the planning area boundary is used to establish long-term plans and described this process:

[Original punctuation provided.]

MVP Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary 2023

- MPA Boundary is just over 120 square miles
- About 73,000 people live within the MPA
- "At a minimum, the MPA boundary shall encompass the entire existing urbanized plus the contiguous area expected to become urbanized within a 20-year period." (23 CFR sec 450.312 (a)(1))

[Slide 10 includes a map of the planning area boundary in 2023.]

MS. SOLLIEN said that every 10 years, MVP has the option to reevaluate the planning area boundary to ensure accuracy with the most recent census.

[1:58:36 PM](#)

SENATOR TOBIN asked for additional information about the 10-year review process. She wondered if this is a mandated review.

[1:59:00 PM](#)

MS. SOLLIEN explained that the metropolitan planning area boundary must encompass the entire urban area boundary. This boundary may change with the census and MVP adjusts planning area boundary in response to this.

[2:00:05 PM](#)

SENATOR TOBIN expressed interest and said she would research it further.

[2:00:19 PM](#)

MS. SOLLIEN advanced to Slide 11:

[Original punctuation provided.]

MVP Nonprofit Filings and Organizational Development

- Filed Articles of Incorporation for a Nonprofit Corporation and the Bylaws with the State of Alaska
- Submitted form 1023 to IRS and applied for an EIN (Employer Identification Number) 501c3 status received 10.30.24
- Drafted and Adopted all the Personnel and Organizational Policies
- Hired an Executive Director and Opened a bank account
- Launch the MTP and Hire Additional Staff (currently here)

[2:01:34 PM](#)

MS. SOLLIEN advanced to Slide 12 and discussed the challenges MVP faces. She explained that MVP differs from other MPOs because it does not have TIP or a metropolitan transportation plan. She explained how MVP's engagement with the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) differs as a result:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Challenges

Without an MTP or TIP, FHWA suggested MVP develop a Program of Projects to program our funding for FY24 and FY25.

MVP's involvement with the STIP and STIP Amendments development has been inconsistent, and it is not clear if our allocation of funding is being programmed the way the Policy Board authorized.

Some of MVP's sub allocations appear to be inconsistent within the separate volumes of the STIP Amendment 2. For example, PL Metro funds are listed in FY25 but not the other years, and carryover is not shown in 2024.

[2:04:12 PM](#)

SENATOR SHOWER asked how MPO would address concerns related to urban planning and property rights.

[2:05:07 PM](#)

MS. SOLLIEN replied that the municipalities and the MatSu Borough are responsible for land use planning regulations. She explained that one benefit of living within the MPO boundary is increased local control of how federal funds are spent within the community. She suggested that this would result in a greater benefit to citizens.

[2:06:24 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN asked whether MPOs are incentivized to advocate against projects in other areas in order to increase the funds available for local MPO projects.

[2:06:50 PM](#)

MS. SOLLIEN replied no. She explained that funding for each region is based on a population-based formula and is therefore not impacted by the level of funding utilized in other areas.

[2:07:34 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN asked if MPOs are eligible for additional funds that are not available for those outside of MPO.

[2:07:48 PM](#)

MS. SOLLIEN expressed uncertainty. She explained that MVP (as MPO and nonprofit) is eligible to apply for grants that municipalities or the borough are not eligible for.

[2:08:21 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN clarified his question. He asked if the state might distribute capital funds for roadways differently due to the federal funding MPOs receive - e.g. capital funds may be distributed in larger amounts to those areas without MPOs.

[2:08:47 PM](#)

MS. SOLLIEN shared her understanding that MPOs do not receive additional funds (the state receives a set amount of federal funds) and briefly discussed how and why MPO funds are distributed.

[2:10:02 PM](#)

JACKSON C. FOX, Executive Director, Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning, Fairbanks, Alaska, introduced himself and provided a brief history of his education and work experience.

[2:10:38 PM](#)

MR. FOX advanced to Slide 2 and gave an overview of his presentation:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Overview

- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)
- Who we are and What we do
- Planning Area Boundary
- Policy Board and Committees
- Who we work with
- Required Transportation Plans
- Relationship between MTP, TIP, and STIP
- Recent STIP Amendments and Coordination with MPOs

[2:11:46 PM](#)

MR. FOX advanced to Slide 3, which includes photos and names of FAST employees. He explained that FAST is a small office.

[2:12:24 PM](#)

MR. FOX advanced to Slide 4 and gave an overview of FAST:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Our Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

- Formed in 2003 following 2000 Census
- Urbanized Area ~70,000 population
- Operated as 501(c)3 Non-Profit Independent Organization
- Our responsibilities:
 - Carry out the Transportation Planning Process under 23 CFR 450, Subpart C, to develop the region's Long- and Short-Range Transportation Plans
 - Empower local governments in the transportation decision-making process
 - Continuously engage the public in planning transportation projects and programs

[2:13:25 PM](#)

SENATOR TOBIN asked how boundary areas have changed since the 2020 census.

[2:13:53 PM](#)

MR. FOX answered that since the 2020 census, FAST has expanded its metropolitan planning area and briefly described these changes. He noted that the new boundary area has not been approved by the governor's office; therefore, FAST continues to operate under the 2013 boundary, which resulted from the 2010 census.

[2:14:48 PM](#)

SENATOR TOBIN noted that it has been 5 years since the 2020 census and questioned whether it is typical for the boundary area approval to take this long.

[2:15:00 PM](#)

MR. FOX replied no. He added that he has been through this process (which is done every 10 years) twice. He reiterated that he has not seen this delay previously (either in Alaska or in the Lower 48).

[2:15:15 PM](#)

SENATOR TOBIN expressed interest in the reasons behind the delay and indicated that she would look into this further.

[2:15:29 PM](#)

MR. FOX advanced to Slide 5 and explained the Intergovernmental Operating Agreement. This agreement is between the state and local governments (i.e. the Fairbanks Northstar Borough; City of North Pole, and City of Fairbanks) and establishes MPO. This was last updated in 2019 when FAST became an independent agency.

[2:16:16 PM](#)

MR. FOX advanced to Slide 6 and discussed the planning area boundary. Slide 6 contains a map of the boundary. He explained that the boundary is based on data provided by the US Census Bureau and is extended out according to FAST's 20-year urban growth projections. The planning area shown is from the 2013 boundary that resulted from the 2010 census. He briefly described various locations within the boundary. He noted that FAST does not do transportation planning on military lands, nor can any federal funds be spent on the military base. He explained that military transportation is funded through the Department of Defense. He added that there is a military seat on FAST's planning committees, allowing them to participate in planning related to projects near the gates of the military base. Both Fort Wainwright and Eielson Airforce Base have seats on the committees.

[2:17:53 PM](#)

MR. FOX advanced to Slide 7 and discussed board and committee structure. The Policy Board is the primary decision-making body. The Technical Committee is the primary advisory committee. Supporting committees include the Bicycle-Pedestrian Committee (primarily citizens), the Project Enhancement Committee, and the Seasonal Mobility Task Force. He noted that all board and committee meetings are open to the public. 48 open public meetings occurred over the past year.

[2:19:35 PM](#)

MR. FOX advanced to Slide 8 and discussed the Policy Board:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Policy Board

Also serves as Board of Directors for Non-profit Corporation

- City of Fairbanks Mayor
- City of North Pole Mayor
- Fairbanks North Star Borough Mayor
- City Council Member
- Borough Assembly Member
- DOTPF Northern Region Director
- ADEC Air Quality Director

7 Board Members: (2) Borough, (3) City, (2) State

MR. FOX noted concerns about air quality standards and federal highway funding.

[2:20:52 PM](#)

MR. FOX advanced to Slide 9 and discussed the make-up of the Technical Committee:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Technical Committee

18 committee members

- DOTPF Planning
- DOTPF Preconstruction
- ADEC Air Quality
- City of Fairbanks Engineering (X2)

- City of North Pole
- University of Alaska
- Borough Community Planning
- Borough Transit
- Borough Rural Services
- Borough Planning Commission
- Alaska Railroad
- Fort Wainwright
- Eielson Air Force Base
- Fairbanks International Airport
- Public Safety Representative
- Tribal Representative
- Freight Representative

[2:22:01 PM](#)

MR. FOX advanced to Slide 10 and discussed the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). MTP is a 20-year transportation plan that feeds into TIP. He explained that TIP is a short-range (4-year) funding plan. He briefly explained MTP and noted that it is a very specific plan. The short-range list from MTP is fed into TIP.

[2:23:05 PM](#)

MR. FOX advanced to Slide 11, which contains a project map of short-, medium-, long-, and very long-range plans (extending from 2023-2045). He briefly discussed the project map.

[2:23:39 PM](#)

MR. FOX advanced to Slide 12, which includes a list of short-term (2023-2027) fast planning and non-fast planning projects. He briefly discussed this list of projects.

[2:23:57 PM](#)

MR. FOX advanced to Slide 13 and discussed the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). He briefly discussed how the short-range list relates to TIP. He noted that the chart on Slide 13 is limited to projects within FAST's boundary that receive federal funding. He further clarified that the fast-planning list excludes state-funded projects.

[2:24:42 PM](#)

MR. FOX advanced to Slide 14 and continued discussing TIP. He said TIP is a conglomeration of all project types. He listed the various projects included. While typical years see \$50 million

investment in transportation projects per construction season, this has been reduced to roughly \$25-\$30 million due to STIP challenges in recent years. He shared the following equation to illustrate TIP:

$$\text{TIP} = \text{Local MPO Projects} + \text{DOT Highway Projects} + \text{Rail Projects} + \text{Transit Projects}$$

[2:25:44 PM](#)

SENATOR TOBIN asked if FAST anticipates the funding to return to the previous \$50 million or if it is expected to remain at \$25-\$30 million.

[2:26:04 PM](#)

MR. FOX said the hope is for a rebound in 2026. 2025 is projected to remain at \$25-\$30 million. He clarified that this reduction is not solely due to STIP challenges and said that air quality standards are impacting the funding plan. He expressed hope that the EPA would lift the conformity freeze by December 2025.

[2:27:15 PM](#)

SENATOR TOBIN asked for an estimate of the reduction of funds due to air quality.

[2:27:46 PM](#)

MR. FOX estimated a 30 -50 percent reduction.

[2:28:09 PM](#)

MR. FOX advanced to Slide 15 and discussed the relationship between MTP, TIP and STIP. MTP is a long-range (20-year), foundational transportation plan. Projects are first identified in MTP. Short-range projects are fed into TIP and the TIP is incorporated (by reference) into STIP.

[2:29:02 PM](#)

MR. FOX advanced to Slide 16 and discussed TIP development and STIP coordination:

[Original punctuation provided.]

TIP Development

Note: Not all projects on the MTP's Short Range Projects list can be afforded to move forward during the 4-year TIP cycle

FAST Planning issues a Call for Project Nominations for local government sponsored projects, and works closely with DOT Planning and Preconstruction staff on selecting State sponsored projects from Short Range list with funding commitments from Statewide apportionments

DOT Planning and Preconstruction staff prepare scopes, schedules, and estimates (SSEs) for all projects

[2:30:30 PM](#)

MR. FOX advanced to Slide 17 and continued discussing TIP development:

[Original punctuation provided.]

TIP development (cont'd)

Projects are then prioritized by Technical Committee and Policy Board for inclusion in the fiscally constrained TIP

The Draft TIP is prepared by FAST Planning staff and shared with DOT Planning and Preconstruction, FHWA, FTA, and EPA staff for interagency review

Once review is complete, the Draft TIP is presented to Technical Committee and Policy Board for release for 30-day public comment period and subsequent adoption

Following adoption, the TIP is advanced DOT Commissioner's Office for Governor's approval and to FHWA and FTA for approval for air quality conformity

[2:31:36 PM](#)

SENATOR TOBIN asked what happens if the governor does not approve TIP.

[2:31:46 PM](#)

MR. FOX said federal funding in TIP for future years would be frozen, including local and highway projects. He emphasized that it is in the best interest of everyone to achieve consensus and ensure gubernatorial approval.

[2:32:14 PM](#)

SENATOR TOBIN commented that one person could potentially derail the hard work done by the community and technical policy board.

She asked if this has happened previously and how FAST would handle this scenario.

[2:32:33 PM](#)

MR. FOX said that while he does not know how FAST would handle this scenario, it has not happened before. He added that it intended to be a cooperative process. He surmised that there is the potential for it to be uncooperative and indicated that there is a conflict resolution process.

[2:33:01 PM](#)

SENATOR TOBIN asked how projects are ranked and what criteria are used to create the prioritization list.

[2:33:22 PM](#)

MR. FOX said that the long-range plan contains evaluation criteria. He briefly described the 2-page scoring form used to rank projects. The list of criteria can be found on FAST Planning's website.

[2:34:05 PM](#)

MR. FOX advanced to Slide 18 and discussed STIP development and STIP amendments:

[Original punctuation provided.]

STIP Development and Recent STIP Amendments

Federal regulations require the State to develop the STIP in coordination with MPOs [23 CFR 450.218 and 23 USC 135(g)(2)], but this historically has not occurred

MPO staff and our Technical Committees and Policy Boards only get to review the documents when they are released for their 45/30-day public comment periods

All three MPOs submit comment letters during the open public comment periods

MR. FOX said that FAST has submitted comment letters for STIP, STIP Amendment 1, and is in the process of submitting a letter for STIP Amendment 2. He said FAST is working with the State regarding STIP Amendment 2 expectations. Quarterly meetings in Fairbanks bring together DOTPF, MatSu Borough, Anchorage, and federal partners to address concerns.

[2:35:52 PM](#)

MR. FOX advanced to Slide 19 and discussed federal uncertainties that may impact the approval timeline for STIP Amendment 2:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Facing Uncertainties

- FHWA Alaska Division Office lost five (5) staff members this month
- U.S. DOT Headquarters instituted added layer of review in approval of STIP Amendments
- Division Offices required to forward all STIP Amendments to Office of General Council (OGC) at U.S. DOT for review before any approval actions can take place
- No timeline has been provided for how long OGC reviews will take
- Could lead to extended review period and disruption to project schedules

[2:37:42 PM](#)

SENATOR SHOWER commented that federal funding and a variety of other issues impact the state's ability to address concerns and complete projects.

[2:38:44 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN asked whether MPO is incentivized to advocate against projects in other areas of the state in order to increase the funds available within the metropolitan planning area boundary.

[2:39:04 PM](#)

MR. FOX replied no. He noted that FAST did comment on the Sterling Highway project (Cooper Landing Bypass) in 2023 in response to the dramatic price escalation. He explained that the state receives a set amount of federal funding and there was concern that an increase in funding for that project would result in a decrease in funding for other areas of the state. He emphasized that the comment was not an attempt to receive more funds for FAST's planning area, but to ensure an equitable distribution across the state.

[2:40:10 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN asked if MPO has access to funds that are unavailable to those outside of MPO.

[2:40:22 PM](#)

MR. FOX replied yes. He explained that some funds are dedicated to urban areas while other funds are dedicated to rural areas. He added that some funds are for statewide use. MPO has access to the urban area funds. MPO does not have access to rural funds. He explained that MPO has access to state funds if DOTPF is interested in using those funds to invest in the MPO's planning area.

[2:41:05 PM](#)

AARON JONGENELEN, Executive Director, Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS), Anchorage, Alaska, advanced to Slide 2 and discussed the AMATS boundary area. AMATS is MPO for the Anchorage/Chugiak/Eagle River/Native Village of Eklutna. Slide 2 contains a map of the boundary area. He noted that the boundary map has been updated; however, the boundary update has not yet been approved. He said that one key change is the removal of the Anchorage CO limited maintenance area. One limited maintenance area remains within the MPO boundary.

[2:42:19 PM](#)

MR. JONGENELEN advanced to Slide 3 and gave a brief overview of AMATS:

[Original punctuation provided.]

AMATS

- Areas with populations of 200,000 or more are a type of MPO called a Transportation Management Area (TMA) which have additional planning requirements.
- AMATS is the only TMA in Alaska.
- MPO staff is housed in the MOA as staff, but we report to the Policy Committee.

[2:43:09 PM](#)

MR. JONGENELEN advanced to Slide 4 and provided an overview of TMA and the required review processes:

[Original punctuation provided.]

TMA

- What are the requirements for the Transportation Management Area?
 - Congestion Management Process

- Certification Reviews
- What are the benefits?
 - Direct allocation of funding

MR. JONGENELEN said that Alaska receives funding based on population allocation. AMATS is the only TMA in the greater-than 200,000 range and thus receives all funding for this group. Funding cannot be redistributed.

[2:46:28 PM](#)

MR. JONGENELEN advanced to Slide 5 and discussed the AMATS policy committee:

[Original punctuation provided.]

AMATS PC

Policy

The decision-making body of AMATS is the Policy Committee (PC) which meets monthly

5 Members

- Department Of Transportation and Public Facilities
 - Commissioner / Designee - Chair
- Municipality of Anchorage
 - Mayor / Designee - Vice Chair
- Department of Environmental Conservation
 - (1) Representative
- Anchorage Municipal Assembly
 - (2) Representatives

[2:47:13 PM](#)

MR. JONGENELEN advanced to Slide 6 and discussed the AMATS technical advisory committee:

[Original punctuation provided.]

AMATS TAC

Technical

- Advisory to the Policy Committee is the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) which meets monthly

11 Members

- Municipality of Anchorage - Traffic Department, Health Department, Environmental Health Program, Public Transportation Department, Planning Department, Parks and Recreation, Department Project Management and Engineering
- Alaska Railroad Corporation
- Don Young Port of Alaska
- Department of Transportation and Public Facilities - Anchorage Field Chief of Planning and Vice Chair Regional Preconstruction Engineer
- Department of Environmental Conservation - Manager of the Southcentral Region Air Quality Program

[2:47:59 PM](#)

SENATOR TOBIN noted the lack of tribal and military representation on both committees. She asked how committee representation was determined and whether AMATS has discussed tribal and military representation.

MR. JONGENELEN replied that AMATS was designated in 1976 and the last redesignation of the operating agreement was in 2003. The operating agreement determines the makeup of those committees. He said there has been discussion about whether the policy committee should be updated. He added that JBER is involved in the Community Advisory Subcommittee. There is an agreement between the Native Village of Eklutna and the Municipality of Anchorage (on behalf of AMATS) regarding their interactions and working together. He briefly described how this agreement works to create a dialogue and enables AMATS to better help that community.

[2:49:38 PM](#)

SENATOR TOBIN commented on the ways that voices from the different communities are incorporated.

[2:49:49 PM](#)

MR. JONGENELEN advanced to Slide 7 and discussed AMATS subcommittees:

[Original punctuation provided.]

AMATS Sub-Committees

Advisory

- Additional advisory committees have met quarterly or ad hoc over the year to send recommendations up to the PC through the TAC.

3 Committees - 11 Members Each

- Community Advisory Committee
- Freight Advisory Committee
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

MR. JONGENELEN noted that AMATS has been understaffed, which has impacted these subcommittees.

[2:50:52 PM](#)

MR. JONGENELEN advanced to Slide 8 and provided information on AMATS staff. Slide 8 contains an infographic with images of each staff member. There are 5 staff members; three positions are filled and two are vacant. He noted that MPOs of similar size typically have 11 staff members, including lawyers. He added that AMATS is able to complete its work in spite of having a smaller staff.

[2:51:31 PM](#)

MR. JONGENELEN advanced to Slide 9:

MPO's and DOTPF Coordination

- Peer exchange
- 3C Process
- Coordination on the STIP Amendment 2
- What is Working Well

[2:51:54 PM](#)

MR. JONGENELEN advanced to Slide 10 and discussed peer exchange:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Peer Exchange

Purpose

- Connecting with peer MPOs and DOTPFs

Lessons Learned

- 10-12 Action Items Developed
- Documentation on the Process
- Continuous Communication and Outreach
- Ensure all staff are part of the process

[2:52:47 PM](#)

MR. JONGENELEN advanced to Slide 11 and discussed the 3C process:

[Original punctuation provided.]

3C Process Documentation

Purpose

- Continuous, Comprehensive, Cooperative

Background

- DOTPF was instructed to develop a 3-C Process
- Document
- AMATS Policy Committee provided feedback on the document

[2:53:29 PM](#)

MR. JONGENELEN advanced to Slide 12 and discussed STIP Amendment 2:

[Original punctuation provided.]

STIP Amendment 2

Concern: Lack of Coordination with MPO prior to release for the public.

Discussion: Positive discussion on finding a way to get MPO or MPO staff to review it prior to release for the public.

[2:54:07 PM](#)

MR. JONGENELEN advanced to Slide 13 and discussed the benefits of healthy partnerships:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Healthy Partnerships

Regional Successes

- Coordination at the regional level
- Coordination at the project level
- HSIP coordination
- Vision Zero Task Force

[2:55:13 PM](#)

SENATOR SHOWER commented on a recent change that removed a traffic lane to create a bike path in an area with few bikers and excessive traffic. He opined that this type of decision could cause people to question the usefulness - or the mission - of MPOs. He turned his attention to the change in federal administration and asked whether any of the MPOs have discussed recent federal administration changes to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which he surmised will impact state planning dynamics.

[2:56:45 PM](#)

MR. JONGENELEN said that AMATS has not been directed about EPA changes. He said AMATS has been made aware of cost increases as a result of the recent tariffs. Those cost increases will impact project funding. He indicated that more time is needed to understand the impact of federal changes.

[2:57:29 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN thanked the presenters.

[2:57:45 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Bjorkman adjourned the Senate Transportation Standing Committee meeting at 2:57 p.m.